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AN

AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT

OF

The Riots in Birmingham,

On the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th Days of July, 1791;

ALSO,

THE JUDGE'S CHARGE, THE PLEADINGS OF THE COUNSEL, AND THE SUBSTANCE OF THE EVIDENCE GIVEN ON

The Trials of the Rioters.

AND

AN IMPARTIAL COLLECTION OF

LETTERS, &c.

Written by the Supporters of the Eſtabliſhment and the Diſſenters, in Conſequence of the Tumults.

THE WHOLE COMPILED,

In order to preſerve to Poſterity the genuine Particulars and Connexions of an Event, which

ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF EUROPE.

PRINTED (FOR THE COMPILER) AND

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Dap
1708

CONTENTS.

	Page
The PREFACE, ſtating the origin of the tumults	iv.
Advertiſement for the commemoration dinner	1
The inflammatory hand-bill - -	2
Incendiary refuted, in reply to ditto -	3
Advertiſement for the author, &c. of the hand-bill	ibid
Advertiſement from the Revolutioniſts -	4
Account of the RIOTS - - - - -	5
The thanks of the Diſſenters to thoſe who protected their property - - - - - -	12
Notice to receive informations - -	ibid
Trials of the Rioters - - -	13
Two addreſſes to his Majeſty -	25
Dr. Prieſtley's letter to the inhabitants of Birmingham	26
Letter from Mr. Keir - - -	29
Mr. Keir's ſecond letter, with the Toaſts	31
Lover of Truth, to Dr. Prieſtley and Mr. Ruſſell	37
John Churchman, to Dr. Prieſtley -	42
An Inhabitant, to ditto - - - -	44
Clericus, to ditto - - - -	46
Dr. Prieſtley to the Printer of the Birm. Gazette	47

Page
Advertiſement from the Diſſenters' Committee 48
Three advertiſements connected with the Riots, 48, 49
Dr. Tatham to the Diſſenters - - - 50
Addreſs of George Rous, Eſq. - - 56
Letter from the Morning Chronicle - 58
Extract from the Preface to the Rev. Mr. Scholefield's Sermon - - - 64
Letter from M. Condorcet to Dr. Prieſtley - 66
Dr. Prieſtley's anſwer - - - - 67
Addreſs from the Society at the Jacobins to Dr. Prieſtley - - - - 68
From the Revolution Society to Dr. Prieſtley 69
Declaration of the Belfaſt Volunteers - - 71
Addreſs and Declaration from the Thatched-houſe Tavern - - - - 73

THE

THE PREFACE.

IN delineating the riſe and progreſs of the late alarming Riots in Birmingham, it will be the aim of the compiler to relate facts, *ſimple and unadorned—plain truth he prefers to flowery fiction; and no conſideration ſhall induce him to relate a circumſtance, or hazard an aſſertion, which he has not the moſt convincing reaſon to believe ſtrictly juſt.*

The depredations committed, were of ſuch a nature as to attract the attention of all Europe; and it muſt be matter of enquiry, among thinking people, what could poſſibly induce, or ſtimulate, the once peaceable inhabitants of Birmingham (remarked for their induſtry and obedience to the laws) to ſuch atrocious and daring acts of violence?

It may not be improper to inform the ſtranger, that the manufacturers, and labouring claſs of people, in this town, are brought up in the earlieſt habits of induſtry; that at five or ſix years of age they become uſeful in the manufactories, in which children of both ſexes are uſually placed; and that the attention which their employments require, together with the neceſſary relaxations from buſineſs, leave little or no time for the improvement of the mind:—they are taught to act, *and not to* think.

The

The late vigorous and repeated attempts of the Diſſenters to obtain a Repeal of the Corporation and Teſt Laws, excited much alarm and apprehenſion amongſt many of the eſtabliſhed Clergy, and was moſt forcibly felt by thoſe reſiding in Birmingham. The name and writings of Dr. Prieſtley *are as much dreaded by his opponents, as they are admired by his friends; and as he long reſided near this town, and was eminently conſpicuous in his endeavours to procure a Repeal of thoſe Acts, it is not ſurpriſing that his ſentiments ſhould be repreſented to the lower claſſes of the people as* dangerous *to the Church and State.*

Attacks made upon his principles and motives in different pulpits, were anſwered from the preſs, which produced his "Familiar Letters to the Inhabitants of Birmingham." *In theſe letters his opponents are treated with irony, and his candid readers convinced by a train of reaſoning, bold, concluſive, and irreſiſtible. But as the Doctor had aſſerted, that "he would not inſure the eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment of this country for twenty years," and that "he was laying grains of gunpowder, which would blow up the fabric;" the* miſchievous thinkers *found no difficulty in perſuading the* unthinking actors, *that he meant literally what he had aſſerted—and, ſtrange as it may appear, yet it is ſtrictly true, that many thought it was the real intention of the Diſſenters* to deſtroy the Churches!—*Whereas it would be an inſult to common ſenſe to ſuppoſe the Doctor meant otherwiſe, than the ſunſhine of reaſon would aſſuredly chaſe away and diſſipate*

diſſipate the miſts of darkneſs and error, and when the people felt *themſelves oppreſſed by* any ſet of men, THEY had the power to redreſs the grievance.

The minds of the inferior claſſes being thus prejudiced and contaminated, an opportunity *was only wanting to ſhew their* attachment *to the* Church and King; *this opportunity preſented itſelf upon notice being given, that it was the intention of the friends of freedom to celebrate the Anniverſary of the French Revolution. (The invitation for this purpoſe, with the papers written in conſequence of it, appear in proper order.) So animated with* religion *and* loyalty *were theſe partiſans, that it is more than probable the ſubſequent devaſtations would have taken place, if the Friends of the Revolution had not aſſembled; for they had ſeparated ſome hours before the attack upon the Hotel windows.*

As a further ſtimulus to the exertions of the populace, a report was induſtriouſly circulated amongſt them, that the Magiſtrates were unfriendly *to the Diſſenters, and would* protect *them in the deſtruction of their places of worſhip. The aſſertion was ſufficient to gain implicit credit with the people I have deſcribed, and thus* armed with authority, *it was the work of* duty *as well as of* choice; *for they have long looked upon the Magiſtrates as the ſole ſources of knowledge and legal information.* Unfortunately, *it was not till after inebriation and ſucceſs had rendered them* ungovernable, *that* active meaſures *were employed to undeceive them.*

At

At this period the civil power was found inſufficient to reſtore peace, and it became neceſſary to apply to Government for military aid; it was granted with an alacrity that claims the gratitude of the inhabitants of Birmingham—and the rapid march of three troops of Light Horſe to our relief, exhilirated the ſpirits of every peaceable individual, and contributed to the diſperſion of the banditti. As an acknowledgment for the expedition and good behaviour of theſe troops, the Diſſenters, on the re-eſtabliſhment of order, preſented *them with One Hundred Pounds; and at a Town's Meeting the like ſum was* voted *to the privates; alſo a handſome ſword to each officer—and a piece of plate, value One Hundred Guineas, to each of the Magiſtrates.*

To the Noblemen and Gentlemen who attended, in order to reſtore the public tranquility, the utmoſt praiſe is due; and their names and exertions will long be revered and admired, by the late ſuffering and deſponding inhabitants of this large and opulent town.

Birmingham, Sept. 26, 1791.

AN

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

RIOTS, &c.

IN the Preface to this work we have endeavoured to ſtate, with truth and impartiality, the grounds of animoſity ſubſiſting between the ſupporters of the eſtabliſhment, and the diſſenters; we now proceed to relate the circumſtances connected with this buſineſs, previous to the late alarming riots. The firſt advertiſement, announcing the intentions of the Friends of Freedom, was as follows:—

" *Hotel, Birmingham, July* 7, 1791.

" Commemoration of the French Revolution.

" A number of gentlemen intend dining together on the 14th inſtant, to commemorate the auſpicious day which witneſſed the emancipation of twenty-ſix millions of people from the yoke of deſpotiſm, and reſtored the bleſſings of equal government to a truly great and enlightened nation; with whom it is our intereſt, as a commercial people, and our duty, as friends to the general rights of mankind, to promote a free intercourſe, as ſubſervient to a permanent friendſhip.

" Any Friend to Freedom, diſpoſed to join the intended temperate feſtivity, is deſired to leave his name at the bar of the Hotel, where tickets may be had at Five Shillings each, including a bottle of wine; but no perſon will be admitted without one.

" Dinner will be on table at three o'clock preciſely."

On the ſecond appearance of this advertiſement, in the Birmingham Gazette, the following was likewiſe inſerted:

" *On Friday next will be publiſhed, price One Halfpenny,*

" An authentic liſt of all thoſe who dine at the Hotel, Temple Row, Birmingham, on Thurſday the 14th inſtant, in commemoration of the French Revolution.

" *Vivant Rex et Regina.*"

This laſt advertiſement was certainly intended to intimidate the meeting at the Hotel, and alarm the people. The author was ſucceſsful in his plan, and may congratulate himſelf on the conſequences of it;—but about this time a few copies of the following imprudent and ſeditious hand-bill were privately circulated, and increaſed the growing ferment:

" *My Countrymen,*

" THE ſecond year of Gallic Liberty is nearly expired. At the commencement of the third, on the 14th of this month, it is devoutly to be wiſhed, that every enemy to civil and religious deſpotiſm, would give his ſanction to the *majeſtic common cauſe*, by a public celebration of the anniverſary. Remember that on the 14th of July the Baſtille, that " High Altar and Caſtle of Deſpotiſm" fell. Remember the enthuſiaſm, *peculiar* to the cauſe of Liberty, with which it was attacked. Remember that generous humanity that taught the oppreſſed, groaning under the weight of inſulted rights, to ſave the lives of oppreſſors! Extinguiſh the mean prejudices of nations; and let your numbers be collected, and ſent as a free-will offering to the National Aſſembly.

" But is it poſſible to forget that your own Parliament is venal? Your Miniſter hypocritical? Your Clergy legal oppreſſors? The Reigning Family extravagant? The Crown of a certain Great Perſonage becoming every day too weighty for the Head that wears it? Too weighty for the People who *gave* it? Your Taxes partial and exceſſive? Your Repreſentation a cruel *inſult* upon the ſacred rights of Property, Religion, and Freedom?

" But on the 14th of this month, prove to the political ſycophants of the day, that You reverence the Olive Branch; that You *will* ſacrifice to public Tranquility, till the Majority *ſhall* exclaim, *The Peace of Slavery is worſe than the War of Freedom.* Of that moment let Tyrants beware."

This

This paper was immediately ſucceeded by the following:

" *An Incendiary Refuted.*

" A Paper having been diſtributed in the town this morning, evidently calculated to weaken the attachment of the people to the preſent excellent form of government, and to excite tumults ſimilar to thoſe which have produced the moſt atrocious murders, anarchy, and diſtreſs in a neighbouring kingdom:—it is thought proper to apprize the good and peaceable ſubjects of this place, that *every poſition* in that ſeditious hand-bill, is as *falſe* and *factious* as the *wretch* who compoſed it.

" The perfect enjoyment we now experience, of every bleſſing, freedom, and protection a mild government can beſtow, is the beſt refutation of the deteſtable calumnies of the author of the hand-bill; and whatever the *modern republicans* may imagine, or the *regicidical propounders of the rights of men* deſign, let us convince them there is enough of loyalty in the majority of the inhabitants of this country, to *ſupport* and *defend* their King; and that we are not ſo deſtitute of common ſenſe, as not to prefer the *order*, *liberty*, *happineſs*, and *wealth*, which is diffuſed through every portion of the Britiſh Empire—to the *anarchy*, the *licentiouſneſs*, the *poverty*, and the *miſery* which now overwhelm the degraded kingdom of France.

" *Birmingham*, *Monday*, *July* 11, 1791."

Many copies of the inflammatory hand-bill were taken, and read with avidity; but the Magiſtrates (Joſeph Carles, Eſq. and the Rev. Dr. Spencer) in conjunction with the High Bailiff, and nine other gentlemen, in order to ſhew their deteſtation of ſuch publications, cauſed the following advertiſement to be inſerted in the Birmingham and Stafford Chronicle on Thurſday (the day of the meeting):—

" ONE HUNDRED GUINEAS REWARD.

" *Birmingham*, *July* 13, 1791.

" Whereas a certain ſeditious and criminal hand-bill, intending to inflame the minds of the people againſt Government, was circulated in this town on Monday laſt, a Reward of One Hundred Guineas is hereby offered to any perſon who will diſcover either the writer, printer, publiſher, or diſtributer, ſo that he or they may be convicted thereof."

And the gentlemen who propoſed meeting at the Hotel, alſo cauſed the following to be inſerted in the ſame paper:

" *Birmingham Commemoration of the French Revolution.*

" Several hand-bills having been circulated in the town, which can only be intended to create diſtruſt concerning the intention of the meeting, to diſturb its harmony, and inflame the minds of the people; the gentlemen who propoſed it, think it neceſſary to declare their entire diſapprobation of all ſuch hand-bills, and their ignorance of the authors.

" Senſible themſelves of the advantages of a Free Government, they rejoice in the extenſion of Liberty to their Neighbours; at the ſame time avowing, in the moſt explicit manner, their *firm attachment* to the *Conſtitution of their own Country*, as veſted in the Three Eſtates of *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*. Surely no Free-born Engliſhman can refrain from exulting in this addition to the general maſs of human happineſs? It is the Cauſe of Humanity! It is the Cauſe of the People!

" *Birmingham, July* 13, 1791."

Whether the inflammatory hand-bill was written by an imprudent Friend of the Revolution, or an Enemy to the Diſſenters, is not known at preſent; certain it is, that every attempt to trace it to its ſource has hitherto proved ineffectual, notwithſtanding the Diſſenters have ſince offered an additional reward of One Hundred Guineas, and Government (in order to diſcountenance ſuch publications, and ſanction the zealous efforts of its friends in Birmingham) have alſo proclaimed a further reward of One Hundred Pounds.—The criminality of this bill appears chiefly to conſiſt in its publication at ſuch a period, as (if it was not the intention of the author) it was natural to conclude that it might produce improper effects, irritated as the populace already were, and to which the large reward offered for the Publiſher, on the day of feſtivity, might perhaps a little contribute. With reſpect to the matter it contains (however indecent and untrue it may be found) it is not more virulent than " Paine's Rights of Man," " Mackintoſh's Anſwer to Burke," " Remarks on the Conſtitution of England," &c. &c. which have been lately publiſhed without incurring the cenſure of Government.——We now proceed to the Commemoration; and from the conduct and declarations of the gentlemen who compoſed

poſed the meeting, the moſt prejudiced cannot ſurely aſſert that there appeared the *leaſt tendency on their part* to promote anarchy and confuſion; on the contrary, they acted as became the free ſubjects of a free ſtate, not only enjoying the bleſſings of their own government, but rejoicing that a neighbouring nation, like themſelves, could ſit down unſhackled and unoppreſſed by Tyranny and Deſpotiſm.

On Thurſday the 14th of July, 1791, in conformity to their advertiſement, eighty-one gentlemen aſſembled at the Hotel, in Temple-row, to commemorate the Anniverſary of the French Revolution; many perſons were aſſembled in front of the houſe, who expreſſed the violence of their temper and indecency of their behaviour, by hiſſing and huſtling the gentlemen as they entered. Dinner was ſerved up at three o'clock, and after ſeveral toaſts had been drank, the company, upon the motion of William Ruſſell, Eſq. ſeparated, and departed from the houſe between five and ſix. The ſhort time they were together was ſpent in the moſt agreeable manner, and they departed thus early in expectation that the populace would not re-aſſemble. In this idea they were miſtaken, for about eight o'clock a large and riotous number had again collected, and notwithſtanding the attendance of the magiſtrates, and the conviction that the company had departed, they demoliſhed the windows in the front of the tavern.

From thence they proceeded to the New Meeting-houſe (Dr. Prieſtley's) a large and handſome building, the gates and doors of which were ſoon burſt open, the pews were demoliſhed, the cuſhions and fragments carried out and burnt in the front of the building, and at length fire was carried in, which conſumed it to the outer walls. A very valuable library, belonging to the congregation, was likewiſe deſtroyed. —Happily for the ſurrounding neighbours the evening was remarkably ſerene, or the violence of the flames would have carried certain deſtruction to a conſiderable diſtance.

Soon after the New Meeting-houſe was forced open, the Old Meeting was attacked by another party, armed with iron crows, bludgeons, &c. who tore down the pulpit, pews, and galleries, and burnt them in the burying-ground; they afterwards ſet fire to the body of the Meeting, but permitted the engines to play upon the adjoining buildings. The

diſtreſs of the neighbourhood was great indeed; but by the falling of the roof, and the outer walls, their apprehenſions from the conflagration were gradually abated. At the deſtruction of theſe, as well as the ſucceeding places, the rioters were particularly active in ſecuring lead, iron, and various other articles, which they ſeemed to think themſelves fully entitled to for their zeal and induſtry.

From the Meetings detachments moved off to Dr. Prieſtley's, at Fair-hill, rather more than a mile from Birmingham, which was attacked with ſavage fury. They began by breaking down the doors and windows, and throwing from every part of the houſe the furniture, library, &c. but as ſome of the Doctor's friends were in the houſe before the banditti, they employed themſelves in packing up and removing part of the library, and ſeveral valuable articles of furniniture;—unfortunately the books were afterwards diſcovered, and deſtroyed. The depredators expreſſed their diſappointment at the Doctor's eſcape, by the moſt violent words; and could they have gained poſſeſſion of his perſon, the conſequences muſt certainly have proved fatal to him. Happily he was prevailed upon to leave his houſe before the arrival of the mob, but he had not time to ſecure any of his manuſcripts, the deſtruction of which he greatly laments, as they were the reſult of the laborious ſtudy of many years, and which he ſhall never be able to re-compoſe.

The ſhrubs, trees, &c. in the garden were torn up, or trampled upon; but there was reaſon for ſome time to hope that the Elaboratory (a little diſtance from the houſe) would have been ſaved, nor did it appear to have been noticed as long as the liquors in the cellar laſted, of the ſpirituous part of which ſome of the rioters had drank ſo immoderately, that they ſeemed no longer to have exiſtence; while others had been rendered ſo extremely quarrelſome, by the plentiful draughts they had taken of wine and ale, that many battles among themſelves were being fought at one time in the adjoining field. The battles collected the greater part of the rioters round them, and the houſe (the floors of which were now ſtrewed over with torn manuſcripts, books, &c.) was, as long as they laſted, almoſt cleared of them; when, however, they were over, the mob returned to the premiſes—the Elaboratory was then broken into, the moſt truly valuable and uſeful apparatus of philoſophical inſtruments, that (according to the

Doctor's

Doctor's declaration) perhaps any individual in this, or in any other country, was ever poſſeſſed of, was deſtroyed. The whole building was ſoon after ſet on fire; a man was killed by the falling of a cornice ſtone, and nothing of the houſe, offices, &c. now remains but the bare walls.

On Friday morning, as they recovered from the fatigue and intoxication of the preceding night, different parties of the rioters entered the town, to the great conſternation of the inhabitants. The doors of every place of confinement were thrown open, and they paraded through the ſtreets armed with bludgeons, loudly vociferating CHURCH AND KING, words which all the inhabitants now chalked upon their window ſhutters and doors, for the ſecurity of their dwellings. In the courſe of the morning, the Earl of Aylesford (to whoſe indefatigable attention and exertions the town has been highly indebted at this alarming ſeaſon) arrived at Dr. Prieſtley's; he harangued what remained of the mob at Fair-hill, and brought them from this ſcene of devaſtation into the town, where he again addreſſed them, and perſuaded them to diſperſe, and retire to their reſpective homes and occupations. About the ſame time the magiſtrates of the place, and many of the principal inhabitants were with other parties in the New Church-yard, endeavouring by the moſt conciliating language to induce them to ſeparate, and deſiſt from further violence. All attempts, however, to check their proceedings, and reſtore peace and order proved fruitleſs.

About two o'clock the elegant manſion of Mr. John Ryland (late Mr. Baſkerville's) at Eaſy-hill, was attacked, and though the rioters were once or twice repulſed, it was not long before they poſſeſſed themſelves of the houſe, and ſet it on fire. Here many of them were ſo inſenſible of their danger, that the flames caught them in the upper chambers, and others were in ſuch a ſtate of intoxication, that they could not be drawn from, but periſhed in, the cellars. Several of the rioters, moſt terribly ſcorched and bruiſed, were conveyed to the Hoſpital, ſome of whom are ſince dead; ſeven bodies, ſo much disfigured that they could hardly be recognized, have been dug out of the ruins; and a man on the following Monday (who had been immured in one of the vaults) worked his way out, but ſoon after expired upon the graſs.

While the houſe of Mr. Ryland was burning, the Magiſtrates, anxious to preſerve the town from further outrage,

until the military could arrive, adopted the meaſure of ſwearing in a number of the inhabitants as additional Conſtables. A party of them immediately proceeded to Mr. Ryland's, but after a conflict of ſome continuance they were driven off by the enraged multitude, and obliged to retire without effecting any uſeful purpoſe.

Information being received about the ſame time that the country reſidence of John Taylor, Eſq. at Bordeſley (about half a mile from the town) was attacked, another party of the gentlemen who had been ſworn conſtables, headed by Captain Carver, repaired thither; they found the rioters in the cellars, and drove them from the premiſes, of which they kept poſſeſſion a ſufficient length of time to remove Mr. Taylor's title deeds, writings, &c. and ſome ſmall part of the furniture. Towards the evening, however, by the junction of thoſe from Mr. Ryland's, and other parts, the rioters had acquired ſuch an acceſſion of ſtrength, that all reſiſtance here was ineffectual, and many of the gentlemen were much beaten. Under theſe circumſtances Capt. Carver made a laſt effort to ſave the houſe. He offered the rioters the immediate payment of one hundred guineas if they would not burn it: He was anſwered by the cry of "No Bribery," huſtled immediately into the midſt of them, and narrowly eſcaped their fury. When the night ſet in the flames appeared through the roof, and this beautiful and ſpacious manſion, with moſt of its ſuperb furniture, ſtables, offices, and ricks, is reduced to its mere walls.

This night the houſe of Mr. Hutton, in the High-ſtreet, which had been aſſaulted once or twice in the day, was entered, and completely ſtript of its contents; his large ſtock of paper, his ſon's very valuable library, and all his furniture, were deſtroyed or carried away. A woman made an attempt to fire the houſe, but was prevented by the ſurrounding ſpectators, out of regard to the neighbouring buildings.

From Mr. Hutton's houſe in town, they proceeded early on Saturday morning to his country houſe at Waſhwood Heath, three miles from hence, which, with its offices, they reduced to aſhes. The occaſion of Mr. Hutton's being ſo obnoxious to the rioters did not ariſe from his religious principles, but on account of his being a very active Commiſſioner of the Court of Requeſts, in which department he has rendered moſt eſſential ſervice to the town.

This

This morning alſo, the large and elegant manſion of Mr. George Humphrys, at Spark-brook, was attacked; and from the generoſity of Mr. Humphrys, and the remonſtrances of his friends, there was reaſon, for ſome time, to expect they would have been diverted from their object; but, at length, ſtupified by intoxication, deaf to remonſtrance, and diveſted of every ſentiment of gratitude, they forcibly entered the houſe (after a ſmart reſiſtance) and ranſacked it of all its rich furniture; after deſtroying the inſide work, breaking all the windows, and doing other miſchief, they went off without burning it.

They then proceeded to the houſe of William Ruſſell, Eſq. at Showell-green (the greater part of the furniture of which had been previouſly removed) and after ranſacking it, they conſumed it, together with the out-offices.

Mr. T. Hawkes, of Moſeley Wake Green, was the next ſufferer; his houſe was ſtript of its windows, books, and furniture, which were either deſtroyed, or carried away.

The next object of the rioters was Moſeley-Hall, the property of John Taylor, Eſq. but occupied by the Dowager Counteſs of Carhampton, to whom they had given notice to remove her effects; her Ladyſhip complied with their requeſt, and in the evening this large and beautiful ſtone manſion, together with all the out-offices, hay-ricks, &c. was deſtroyed.

The houſe of Mr. Harwood, in the neighbourhood of Moſeley, was alſo burnt and deſtroyed; as was likewiſe the houſe of the Rev. Mr. Hobſon, on the Moſeley road.

The terror and diſtreſs which pervaded the whole town on Saturday, while theſe dreadful ſcenes were acting, will be better conceived than deſcribed. The magiſtrates had tried every means of perſuaſion, to no effect; large bills were ſtuck up, requeſting all perſons to retire to their reſpective homes, to no purpoſe; nothing certain was known reſpecting the approach of the military; and numbers of the rioters, joined by thieves, and drunken proſtitutes from every quarter, were with blue cockades in their hats, in all parts of the town, and in ſmall bodies, levying contributions on the inhabitants. There was ſcarcely an houſe-keeper that dared refuſe them meat, drink, money, or whatever they demanded. The ſhops were

were moſtly ſhut up, buſineſs nearly at a ſtand, and every body employed in ſecreting and removing their valuables. Very happily, however, the body of the rioters, overcome with liquor and fatigue, lay all the night in the fields, round their conflagrations in the country, and did not come into the town; the firſt intelligence that was received of them on Sunday morning was, that a party was gone to Kingſwood, about ſeven miles off, where they burnt the Diſſenting Meeting-houſe, and the dwelling-houſe for the Miniſter; alſo the premiſes of Mr. Cox, a farmer, at Worſtock.

In the afternoon accounts were alſo received that another party had aſſembled at Edgbaſton-hall, the reſidence of Dr. Withering, which place they viſited the day before, but left uninjured, after being regaled with the Doctor's liquor. They now, however, notwithſtanding the plentiful manner in which the liquor was dealt out to them, appeared determined to plunder the Hall; ſome of the rooms were pillaged, and they were even preparing, it is thought, to deſtroy the place, when information was received that troops were approaching Birmingham. No ſooner had the rioters notice of this, than the major part of them ſneaked off in different directions, in bodies of ten, twelve, or more together; and the few that at laſt remained were quickly driven off the premiſes by the neighbours. Dr. Withering's books, philoſophical apparatus, and valuable collections in natural hiſtory, ſuffered much by the haſty removal of them, after his firſt alarm.

The reader will eaſily judge what a relief this certain intelligence of the approach of the military muſt have afforded the alarmed and agitated minds of the inhabitants of the town.—Thouſands went out to meet them, and about ten o'clock three troops of the 15th regiment of dragoons, attended by the magiſtrates, entered this place, amidſt the acclamations of the people, and illuminations of the ſtreets, through which they paſſed. They halted at the Swan Inn, where the fatigued and fainting ſtate of both officers and men evinced the exertions they had made for our relief. About ſeven o'clock that morning the Miniſter's expreſs had arrived with orders for them to march hither: at half paſt ten o'clock they left Nottingham, and though the greater part of their horſes were haſtily fetched from graſs, ſuch was their zeal in the ſervice, that they arrived at Erdington, within four miles of the town (after a journey of upwards of fifty-three miles) a little after ſeven o'clock.—

Captain

Captain Polhill, who commanded, brought the troops the firſt forty miles without halting.

The arrival of the military not only diſſipated the apprehenſions of the inhabitants, but immediately reſtored tranquillity to the town. On Monday, what few remained of the rioters took their courſe towards King's Norton, Bromſgrove, and Hales-Owen, where, ſplit into ſmall parties, they levied contributions on the peaſantry. On Tueſday night, a body of them having aſſaulted Mr. Male's houſe, at Belle Vue, near the Leaſowes, the Earl of Aylesford, with Juſtice Woodcock, and a few of the light dragoons haſtened thither. The people of the neighbourhood had, however, before their arrival, overpowered the rioters, and ſecured ten of them. Upon this his Lordſhip returned with the troops, and we believe that the lawleſs banditti, which had the two preceding days ſo much terrified the country, made their laſt appearance in any numbers here.

Many houſes in the town and neighbourhood (beſides thoſe already enumerated) partially ſuffered, but were ſaved from deſtruction either by perſuaſion, or by the gift of money or liquor; among theſe are the houſes of Mr. T. Ruſſell, near Moſeley; of Mr. Harry Hunt, at Lady-wood; of the Rev. Mr. Coates, at the Five-ways; and Mr. Smith's houſe (Hay-hall.) Mr. Jukes having intimation that his houſe in the Green Lanes was to be attacked, removed all his furniture, liquors, &c. took out his ſaſhes and window frames, and conveyed whatever the rioters were likely to pull down, to a place of ſecurity. Owing to this judicious conduct, and the remonſtrances and ſingular exertions of the Rev. Mr. Darwell, the houſe was ſaved from deſtruction.

On Wedneſday three troops of the 11th regiment of light dragoons, and on Friday three troops of the 1ſt regiment of dragoon guards marched into the town. Colonel de Lancey, with an Aid du Camp, arrived on Tueſday, from the King, to take the command of the military; and ſuch was his Majeſty's anxiety to provide for the ſecurity of this neighbourhood, that he had given orders for four thouſand troops to march to our relief from different quarters.——About 500 of the 31ſt regiment of foot, and three troops of the Oxford Blues have ſince arrived, and ſtill remain with us.

The Magiſtrates were aſſiſted by the Earl of Aylesford, the Earl of Plymouth, Capt. Finch, Sir Robert Lawley, Mr. Cecil, Mr.

Mr. Moland, Mr. Digby, Mr. Holbeche, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Woodcock, &c. to whom the town is under great obligations.

Immediately on the reſtoration of tranquility, the following advertiſement appeared in the Birmingham Gazette:

"The Diſſenters of Birmingham deſire to return their grateful acknowledgments to all thoſe Members of the Eſtabliſhed Church who in any manner exerted themſelves during the late Riots, in defence of their perſons or property; more particularly to thoſe who, in the true ſpirit of Chriſtianity, received into their houſes, and under their protection, many families of Diſſenters who were obliged to leave their own habitations; and alſo to all thoſe who received and protected their goods. They truſt that good men of every denomination, will conſider this protection as highly honourable to the humanity of thoſe who gave it, and they think it to be the more meritorious, as theſe generous protectors did thereby expoſe themſelves to danger from a lawleſs mob, who wanted only *pretence* for depredation."

The ſame paper likewiſe contained the following:

"Notice is hereby given, That a Special Meeting of ſeveral of his Majeſty's Juſtices of the Peace, for the counties of Warwick and Worceſter, will be held at nine o'clock this morning, at the Swan Inn, Birmingham, to receive *informations reſpecting the late Riots*; and all perſons that have it in their power to give any evidence relative thereto, are deſired then and there to give their attendance.

"*Birmingham, July* 25, 1791."

Accordingly ſeveral magiſtrates for the above counties met, who were aſſiſted by an eminent Counſel from London, the Solicitor to the Treaſury, and Mr. Juſtice Bond; when, after receiving many depoſitions, they committed fifteen of the rioters to Warwick and Worceſter county priſons; and iſſued out warrants for the apprehending of many others, who had abſconded.

His Majeſty was alſo graciouſly pleaſed to proclaim a reward of 100l. on the conviction of the inſtigators, and principals in theſe riots.

AN AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT OF

The Trials of the Rioters at Warwick,

IN THE YEAR 1791;

INCLUDING THE JUDGE'S CHARGE,

AND THE

Speeches of the different Counſellors ſent by Government.

[From Short-hand Minutes taken in Court]

The Aſſizes at Warwick began on Monday, Aug. 22.—Mr. Baron *Perryn* came into Court about eleven o'clock, and the Grand Jury being ſworn, he addreſſed them in the following terms:

" *Gentlemen of the Grand Jury,*

" YOU are now aſſembled here in order to perform a duty of a nature the moſt weighty and important—you are to enquire into all the crimes and offences, and your preſentments are to be founded on the evidence that ſhall be given before you. Gentlemen, of the priſoners now in cuſtody, there are many who are charged with being concerned in the late dreadful riots in Birmingham. In theſe riots, *two diſſenting meeting-houſes*, and ſeveral other buildings, were deſtroyed, to the alarm not only of this county, but of the kingdom in general. I need not tell you that all riots are improper, but it is my duty to recommend theſe charges to your particular conſideration. The law declares that inſurrections for real or imaginary grievances, which ſhall have for their object the deſtruction of houſes by force, ſhall be deemed high-treaſon.—Unhappily, not a few inſtances does our hiſtory furniſh of the country being thrown into anarchy and confuſion by inſurrections, which, therefore, it is the duty of every one to aſſiſt in preventing, leſt this Conſtitution (certainly the beſt in the world) ſhould be ruined and deſtroyed.

" The Legiſlature, to prevent riots, paſſed in the 1ſt of Geo. I. an act called the *Riot Act*. By this act is declared, that if more than twelve perſons ſhall aſſemble together, and ſhall refuſe to diſperſe within one hour after they ſhall be required to do ſo by a Juſtice of the Peace, they ſhall be deemed guilty of felony without the benefit of Clergy. And by a clauſe in the ſame act, it is provided, that if perſons aſſembled together ſhall begin to pull down any building, they ſhall likewiſe be ſaid to

be

be guilty of felony, although *no* Juſtice of Peace ſhall require them to ſeparate. On *this* clauſe the charges againſt the priſoners now in cuſtody are to be founded. After having thus ſtated this law to you, I cannot refrain from expreſſing my wonder and aſtoniſhment, that when all religious perſecution had ceaſed, and toleration was extended to all, that ſuch a period ſhould have been choſen for the commencement of perſecution, and for the commiſſion of every ſpecies of violence and deſolation. Whatever circumſtances might occaſion theſe inſurrections, nothing can juſtify them. Britiſh ſubjects of every perſuaſion, either in politics or religion, are equally entitled to the protection of the law. To you, Gentlemen, the care of the public tranquility is entruſted.—I will not detain you longer from the performance of your duty, further than to expreſs my firm reliance on your wiſdom, your juſtice, and your diſcretion."

Francis Field, alias *Rodney*, labourer, late of the pariſh of Aſton, near Birmingham, was indicted for *Arſon*, viz. That he, not having the fear of God before his eyes, &c. did, on the 15th of July laſt, wilfully and maliciouſly ſet fire to the houſe of John Taylor, Eſq. in the aforeſaid pariſh, and at the ſame time did burn the ſaid houſe, againſt the ſtatute.

Mr. Newnham, counſel for the proſecution, ſtated, that it was his peculiar province, in the ſituation in which he ſtood, to ſupport the preſent proſecution on the grounds which he ſhould proceed to lay before the Jury. The priſoner was charged with ſetting fire to, and burning Mr. Taylor's houſe on that day, in which every perſon muſt know ſuch tumultuous and dangerous riots took place as were a ſcandal and reproach to any well regulated government. It was not in the power of the magiſtrates, or other well diſpoſed perſons to withſtand them. They were borne down by the tide of tumult, and Juſtice herſelf was overwhelmed by the rapid ruſh of violence and deſolation. To ſuch an exceſs were theſe riots carried, that his Majeſty, in order to preſerve the property of his ſubjects in future, had taken them up as an act of government. Compaſſion certainly might be entertained for the priſoner, who, with others, in the frenzy of deluſion, demoliſhed one of the moſt elegant ſtructures in the county of Warwick; yet that ought not to be ſuffered to operate ſo far as to acquit him of the crime imputed to him, if it ſhould be proved in evidence that he had been guilty of it. Viciſſitudes of opinions

had

had often been known to produce the groſſeſt inſults on the government of this country. In the Riots in 1780, the capital was threatened with deſtruction, and was lighted up from one end to the other, by fires kindled ſolely by the frenzy of opinion. The habitation of Mr. Taylor ſtill ſmoked in its ruins. The priſoner at the Bar was charged with ſetting fire to it—what might be his opinion, he would not pretend to ſtate, nor was it of any importance, but this aſſertion he would make, that the only ſafe anchor of the conſtitution was the Law. Without that general protector of property and life, without that ſheet-anchor of protection and hope, all would be ſubject to the aſſumed tyranny of opinions impoſed by any tumultuous rabble whatever.----He concluded with obſerving, that if the charges brought againſt the priſoner ſhould be proved by the evidence, it would be unneceſſary for him to ſuggeſt to the Jury what ought to be done---becauſe well was he convinced, that they would do what a Jury ought to do, their duty.

The following witneſſes were called:

Edward Cotterell ſaid he lived at Deritend, in the pariſh of Aſton, near Birmingham. On the 15th of July he was at the houſe of Mr. Taylor, at three o'clock, where he ſtayed till five. Many perſons were about the houſe, but no miſchief was done between thoſe two hours. At ſeven o'clock he returned to Mr. Taylor's, and found a larger number of people there than before. At eight o'clock they began to break the windows and to enter the houſe. The priſoner was among them: he went up ſtairs, where he remained ſome time. About half paſt nine he ſaw him again, throwing the frames of the windows, and ſome pieces of bedſtead into the fire. He did not however know who lighted the fire, or when it was lighted.

Samuel Healy confirmed the teſtimony of the laſt witneſs.—In order to burn the houſe, fire-brands were carried from a public-houſe in the lane to Bordeſley (the name of Mr. Taylor's ſeat) and ſet before the houſe; on this fire the furniture was thrown from the chamber windows, and ſoon after a fire was kindled in the Hall. The priſoner coming down ſtairs gathered ſome fire-brands in his hand, and carried them up ſtairs into one of the rooms; a ſecond time he came down for a ſimilar purpoſe, and conveying fire with him up ſtairs again, threw it into another room; he then ſet the ſtair caſe on fire at the landing place. During all the time he (the witneſs) was in the houſe, but the fire beginning to rage with great fury, he

was

was obliged to depart with as much ſpeed as poſſible. In order to make the flame aſcend with more rapidity, the priſoner ripped the paper from off the walls, threw it with ſome broken furniture into the fire, and ſtirred it with a ſtaff he had in his hand; about eleven o'clock the roof fell in, in conſequence of the different fires kindled in the ſeveral chambers and on the ſtaircaſe. He ſwore to the perſon of the priſoner, whom he had ſeen ſeveral times in Birmingham, previous to this tranſaction. He alſo ſaid, that during the preſent tranſaction he was drunk.

In his croſs examination he declared that he ſaw Field go up ſtairs, and that the fire in the Hall did not burn the houſe, becauſe it was paved with flags. The roof fell in, in conſequence of the fire carried up ſtairs by the priſoner.

John Brookes corroborated the evidence of the laſt witneſs—He ſaw the priſoner throw the furniture into the fire before the houſe, but he did not ſee him throw any fire into the parlour.—He beheld him however, depoſit ſome window-caſes in the firſt floor, at which time the houſe was on fire.

Solomon Gardner proved that Mr. Taylor's houſe was in a good condition before the 15th of July, and that at the expiration of that night it was burnt down.—No witneſſes were called by the priſoner's Counſel.

His lordſhip, after entering particularly into the evidence given by each, declared, that it was no mitigation of the priſoner's guilt that he was drunk—no man could exculpate himſelf from one crime by the committing of another.

As the Jury was on the point of retiring, one of the Jurymen ſtated to the Judge, that he entertained doubts relative to Healy's evidence. He had once been his ſervant, and he knew him to be poſſeſſed of very little veracity.

Baron PERRYN replied, that of the degree of credit to be attached to Healy's evidence the Jury muſt judge. Nothing had appeared on the trial to impeach his teſtimony.—He adviſed the jury, however, to retire, and then the gentleman who entertained doubts might ſuggeſt them more fully.——After being abſent an hour, the Jury found the priſoner—*Guilty.*

[During the abſence of the Jury, John Edwards and Walter Underwood were committed by his Lordſhip into the cuſtody of the Gaoler, for threatening Joſeph Elwell with "*a damn'd good licking*," if he appeared an evidence againſt the rioters].

William Rice, late of the pariſh of Aſton, near Birmingham, was indicted, for that he, with other perſons, to the number of twenty

twenty and more, on the 16th of July laſt, in the pariſh aforeſaid, with force and arms, riotouſly and maliciouſly did aſſemble together to the diſturbance of the public peace; and being aſſembled unlawfully and with force, did *begin* to pull down and demoliſh the houſe of Mr. *William Hutton*, contrary to the Statute, &c.

In a ſhort introductory ſpeech, Mr. Newnham ſtated, that this indictment differed from the laſt, inaſmuch as the priſoner was charged with being engaged in thoſe riots which, in the knowledge of every one, had produced ſuch an alarm to the town of Birmingham in general, and ſuch loſſes to many of its inhabitants—Mr. Hutton was Commiſſioner and Preſident of the Court of Requeſts in Birmingham: why he had been marked out as the devoted victim of the fury of theſe rioters, had not been diſcloſed nor even gueſſed at. In the deſtruction of his houſe, the priſoner had not only been preſent, and comforting the rioters, but he had alſo aided and aſſiſted them.—Two witneſſes ſtated themſelves to have been hired by Mr. Hutton to ſtay and guard his houſe on the 15th of July laſt, as he apprehended that the mob would deſtroy it. Between four and five o'clock on the morning of the 16th, a mob came, huzzaing and crying "*Church and King for ever*," and demanded liquor; that was given them, and they went away. At ſix they returned, with the priſoner and another at the head of them. On being requeſted to ſpare the building, they replied, "*Damn them, it ſhall come down.*" Accordingly the windows were firſt broke to pieces, and the priſoner entering the houſe, proceeded to pull down the banniſters, and do other damage to the houſe, which was in a ſhort time deſtroyed by fire.

On the part of the priſoner an *alibi* was ſet up.

George Rowell ſwore, that between four and five o'clock in the morning of the 16th of July, he was going to ſee the ruins of Mr. Taylor's houſe; on his way he met the priſoner, who went with him to one Tart's, where they parted about ſix.

George Maſcall ſaw the priſoner at his houſe about half paſt ſix o'clock, on the morning of the 16th of July. He came with ſeveral other perſons, who, behaving in a riotous manner, were reprimanded by the priſoner, who ſwore that he would ſtrike any one who attempted to injure the property of the witneſs. At his houſe they remained till about ſeven o'clock, when the priſoner went to the left, and the others to the right. The left was contrary to Mr. Hutton's houſe, which was then on fire.——The Jury found the priſoner—*Not Guilty*.

Robert Whitehead was tried for the ſame offence for which the laſt priſoner was indicted.

The ſame evidence was produced in this as in the laſt trial, with this addition, that the priſoner wrenched a gun from one of the witneſſes, knocked him down, and would have murdered him, but for the intervention of another perſon. All the evidence on the part of the crown ſwore to the priſoner's perſon, and to his activity in demoliſhing Mr. Hutton's houſe.

On behalf of the priſoner,

James Moulds (though one of the perſons who firſt informed Mr. Hutton of the priſoner's activity in deſtroying his houſe) was examined, who contradicted the evidence for the proſecution *in toto*. He ſaid that the priſoner endeavoured to prevent the mob from doing any damage to Mr. Hutton's houſe; that he took the gun from the witneſs for the Crown, becauſe he ſeemed to dare the mob with it; and ſtruck him only with a ſtick. Moulds alſo declared that the priſoner did not break any of the windows, but tried to preſerve Mr. Hutton's property.

Some witneſſes gave the priſoner an excellent character.

Baron PERRYN, after particularizing the evidence, ſtated, that it reſted with the Jury to decide, whether they thought the *four* witneſſes produced by the Crown were to be believed in preference to the *one* witneſs (James Moulds) produced by the priſoner?—The Jury brought in their verdict—*Not Guilty*.

John Green, *John Clifton*, and *Bartholomew Fiſher*, were indicted for that they, with one *Wm. Jones*, at large, and many others, did riotouſly aſſemble on the 15th of July laſt, and begin to pull down the dwelling-houſe of Joſeph Prieſtley, LL.D.

Mr. Coke, counſel for the proſecution, addreſſed the Jury in the following words:

" Gentlemen, You are now going to enter upon the ſame important buſineſs which engaged your attention yeſterday.—The priſoners at the bar ſtand indicted for having aſſiſted in demoliſhing the houſe of Dr. Prieſtley. That houſe, and all that periſhed during the riots, were ſacrificed becauſe they were the property of Diſſenters. Gentlemen, I am far from adopting the opinions of Dr. Prieſtley, but notwithſtanding this, I do not the leſs reſpect his moral character; I believe him to be exemplary in the diſcharge of every private and ſocial virtue. Neither do I rank myſelf among Diſſenters; on the contrary, I am a friend to our preſent religious eſtabliſhment; but at the ſame time I do not heſitate to declare, that the Diſſenters are a reſpectable

reſpectable and peaceable body of ſubjects. It is ſolely on account of their *opinions* that they have been thus infamouſly perſecuted. I call it *perſecution*; for if any thing deſerves that title, it is the cruel and unmerited attack they have lately ſuſtained; Gentlemen, if this be a country in which men are to be perſecuted for their opinions, I am ſure it is a country not worth living in, and every man of ſpirit and underſtanding will ſell his property, and ſeek for an aſylum elſewhere.—It is to you, Gentlemen, that the eyes of the whole kingdom are turned, for the puniſhment of the criminals who have been active in this perſecution. I do not arraign you for any verdict you may have already given, but I intreat you to remember the nature of your office, and the ſolemn oath that you have taken. Dr. Prieſtley, whatever his ſentiments may be, is entitled to the protection of the law: it is true, that I differ from his ſentiments, both theological and political, but had I been at Birmingham on the night of the 14th of July, I would have loſt my life in defence of his property; and I would have ſacrificed it the more readily on account of our difference in opinion. Had the Dr. continued in his houſe but one half hour longer, what would have been the conſequence? he muſt have periſhed in the flames which conſumed his property—and then what an exchange would ſociety have made! would the loſs of Dr. Prieſtley be compenſated by the lives of an hundred ſuch miſcreants as now ſtand at the bar?—In the courſe of next year there will be another 14th of July, and probably there will be another meeting; nor can it be denied but gentlemen have a right to meet and dine together if they pleaſe: but if you acquit the perpetrators of the late riots, conſider the dreadful outrages to which your conduct may encourage them to proceed.—Remember, Gentlemen, that perſecution invariably promotes the cauſe of the perſecuted; it cements the ſuffering party in a ſtricter bond of union: I call upon you, therefore, as friends to the Church, to diſcourage it as far as you are able, by being impartial in your verdicts. Conſider alſo, that in courſe of time ſome of your poſterity may be ſubjected to perſecution, and reflect what an example you will leave to future Juries if you are neglectful of your duty in the preſent inſtance, and if you verify that diſgraceful report which is now circulating in Warwick, "that the Jury are determined to acquit all the rioters."

[Here he was interrupted by a Juryman, who objected to his mentioning the report; but the Judge, on being appealed

pealed to, ſaid he ſaw nothing improper in it, and that he would not ſtop him.]

The Foreman of the Jury then roſe to complain, that Mr. Coke had caſt a reflection on their conduct, and that he had come there determined to do his duty. Very well, ſir, replied the Judge, the Counſel is doing *his duty*, do you *do yours*.

Mr. Coke exculpated himſelf from the charge, by ſaying, he believed the report was without foundation; and then proceeded to call the evidence.

John Harris ſaid he was preſent on the night of the 14th of July, when Dr. Prieſtley's friends were giving liquor to about thirty perſons, aſſembled before his houſe, who were, after ſome time, perſuaded to go away. Soon, however, did they return, with increaſed numbers, broke the doors and windows to pieces, and entered the houſe. Green and Fiſher were among the mob, and very active in deſtroying the building. Clifton was alſo there, but he ſaw very little of him, becauſe he was employed in removing ſome of the furniture to a place of ſafety. About twelve the next day the mob ſet fire to the houſe, and burnt it. In his croſs-examination, he ſaid that he did not ſee the priſoners there the firſt time the mob came, or when they began to demoliſh the houſe.

Joſeph Foſter confirmed the evidence given by the laſt witneſs, as did *Alexander Clarke*.

In ſumming up the evidence Baron PERRYN declared that he did not think the evidence was ſtrong enough to affect *Clifton*.——The Jury found *Green* and *Fiſher*—*Guilty*, and *Clifton*—*Not Guilty*.

John Stokes, for beginning to pull down the Old Meeting-houſe in Birmingham, was *acquitted*, on account of a defect in the indictment. In the regiſter of the Meeting-houſe in 1689, it was ſtated to be ſituated in Philips-ſtreet; whereas, in the indictment, it was ſaid to be in Old Meeting-houſe Lane.

William Shuker was indicted for beginning to pull down the dwelling-houſe of John Ryland, Eſq. in Birmingham.

Joſeph Elwell ſtated that he was preſent when the mob was deſtroying the houſe of Mr. Ryland. The priſoner, who was the Cryer of Birmingham, was amongſt the mob, ringing his bell, and crying, "*Damn the Preſbyterians, down with them, burn them.*" He aſſiſted in carrying away the wainſcotting, and in ſetting fire to the houſe.

John

John Hipkiſs ſaw the priſoner in one of the rooms of Mr. Ryland's houſe, while the mob were demoliſhing the houſe. He did not ſee, however, any thing in his hand, but he ſaid, "*Damn it, down with it.*"

John Luff ſwore alſo that the priſoner was active in deſtroying Mr. Ryland's houſe; that he received wainſcotting and furniture from the people in the houſe, carried it away, and afterwards ſet fire to the houſe.

Mr. Kenrick ſwore to ſome expreſſions made uſe of by the priſoner, relative to his having ſet fire to the houſe.

On behalf of the priſoner, ſeveral witneſſes contradicted part of the evidence of the firſt witneſs for the proſecution, and declared John Luff was a man not to be believed on his oath.

The Judge therefore ſtated to the Jury, that on account of this impeachment of the teſtimony of the two moſt material witneſſes, no credit ought to be given to their evidence; with regard to Mr. *Kenrick*'s evidence, he conceived it not to be of material importance in the preſent caſe, becauſe it related to another ſuppoſed fact, viz. the priſoner's having ſet fire to Mr. Ryland's houſe.——*Acquitted.*

Joſeph Careleſs was indicted for beginning to pull down the dwelling-houſe of John Ryland, Eſq. on the 15th of July.

Mr. Newnham opened the caſe to the Jury. Hitherto, he ſaid, in the conduct of theſe proſecutions, which his Majeſty had directed to be at the expence of the public, he had, and ſhould ſtill refrain from ſtating any thing, which might, in the judgment of any one, excite improper paſſions. He wiſhed only to remind the Jury, that theſe proſecutions were not carried on for vindictive motives, but merely for the ſake of public juſtice, and to read this leſſon to all his Majeſty's ſubjects, that his government, and the peace of all his ſubjects through his wide domains, was not to be interrupted by a lawleſs rabble, and tumultuous riots. Not for the ſuffering Mr. Ryland, or for the priſoner, was he choſen to conduct theſe proſecutions, but to inform the world, that his Majeſty and his Miniſters meant nothing more but to make known, that in times of public riot, his miniſtry and his government would ſtand forth as the aſſertors and protectors of the Engliſh Law. That law is the tenure by which all poſſeſs what is moſt dear to them. By that ſecurity, not by the capricious will of a tumultuous mob, do Britiſh ſubjects live. He had before ſtated that the exertions of the magiſtrates, and others, could not quell theſe riots. It

remained for the ſlow-pacing ſtep of the law, which though it had leaden heels, had iron hands. He ſhould wave all comments on the alarm of the inhabitants of Birmingham, and proceed merely to ſtate the fact, deſiring the Jury only to decide, according to the evidence, whether the priſoner was guilty or not. The priſoner had been charged with beginning to demoliſh the houſe of Mr. Ryland. He had been ſtated to be the ringleader of the mob, and to have encouraged them by ſaying, "*Come along, my lads, we will deſtroy that houſe.*"—If this fact were proved, it could not be doubted what ought to be done. The Gentlemen of the Jury would bear in mind that whenever a Jury departed from the evidence, from that time the law became not only uncertain, but uſeleſs. He demanded a verdict according to the evidence alone, and he expected that, liſtening to their oaths and the teſtimony produced before them, they would purſue that line of conduct which their duty preſcribed.

Thomas Cooper ſtated, that he was at Mr. Ryland's houſe on the 15th of July laſt, and ſaw the priſoner among the mob, crying, "*Church and King.*" He ſaw him throw bricks and ſtones up to the window, and fetch bottles of liquor out of the houſe, exclaiming at the ſame time, "*Come, my lads, we'll ſoon have it down.*" Several other perſons were alſo very riotous.

Thos. Parker ſaw the priſoner at Mr. Ryland's, with a long rail, knocking down the bricks of a bow window belonging to the houſe.

Eliz. Grice (ſiſter in law to the priſoner) contradicted the evidence of theſe two witneſſes. She ſaid ſhe ſaw the priſoner at Mr. Ryland's houſe; that he attempted to let ſome pigs out of a ſtye near the houſe, to prevent their being burnt; that he alſo threw from an out-houſe ſome truſſes of hay and ſtraw for the ſame purpoſe; for this conduct the mob threw fire at him.

Baron PERRYN remarked to the Jury, that two witneſſes had given teſtimony againſt the priſoner, which was clear, diſtinct, and uncontradictory; a ſingle witneſs, on part of the priſoner, ſtood in oppoſition to their evidence. She had ſaid that the priſoner attempted to ſave the pigs and the hay and ſtraw. If that were true, he certainly had no idea of ſaving Mr. Ryland's property when he broke the brick-work of the bow window with the iron rail. It remained, however, with the Jury to decide whether they would believe two or one.——*Not Guilty.*

Wm. Hands, alias *Hammonds*, indicted for a ſimilar offence.

Mr. Newnham declared, that he roſe up with very ſerious impreſſions, and with a great deal of feeling, which he would endeavour

endeavour to ſtifle as much as he could. With the utmoſt deference, and under the correction of the Court, he begged leave to ſtate to the Jury, that their only guide ought to be the ſolemn oaths they had taken, and the evidence. This was no common caſe. It was one in which the public ſafety was intereſted and involved. He entreated the Gentlemen to remember, that in the late riotous proceedings, the priſoner and his aſſiſtants had no feelings of compaſſion or humanity; they carried into exceſs the purpoſe of deſolation and deſtruction, for which they were aſſembled; if however, in oppoſition to the law, the Jury conceived that they were not called upon to decide according to evidence that had not been impeached; if they thought that judgment ought not to be founded on proof that might be adduced before them, he could only expreſs a wiſh that they might ſleep quiet in their beds.

James Trueman went on the 15th of July laſt to the houſe of Mr. Ryland, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. A great number of people were aſſembled round it, among whom was the priſoner, whom he ſaw knocking the window caſes to pieces with a piece of wood. The building was afterwards conſumed by fire.

Job Harvey confirmed the teſtimony of the laſt Witneſs. He ſaw the priſoner alſo in the inſide of the houſe pulling up the boards of the floor of one of the rooms and throwing them on the fire. The priſoner called no witneſſes.——*Guilty.*

James Watkins was indicted for the ſame offence.

Nathaniel Addock was at Mr. Ryland's houſe on the 15th of July, from five till ſeven o'clock in the evening. He ſaw a great mob aſſembled, and the priſoner knocking the back-door to pieces with an axe. Many were rioters; others looked on.---In his croſs-examination he was not able to aſcertain the number of perſons engaged in demoliſhing Mr. Ryland's houſe---there were about *ten*, but he could not ſwear to more.

Mr. *Willis* therefore contended, on the part of the priſoner, that the indictment could not be ſupported, and that the priſoner ought to be acquitted. For the Act on which the indictment is founded ſays "That if any perſons to the number of twelve or more, ſhall be aſſembled." &c. Evidence had only been produced of ten.

The Counſel for the proſecution replied, that, in a riot, proof of more than three was ſufficient.

Baron *Perryn* declared, that he underſtood the number ſhould be

be twelve; for though one of the clauſes ſays *three*, the Act commences by fixing the number at twelve. In proſecutions for the Crown, it was always proper not to puſh any ſtatute too far. However, he thought the caſe ſhould be left to the Jury, who he was convinced from their conduct *would not convict the priſoner againſt the evidence*. But waving the ſtrict law, he did not think the caſe ſo clear in point of evidence. If, however, the Jury found the priſoner guilty, he would reſerve the conſtruction of the Act of Parliament for the opinion of the Twelve Judges.——The Jury acquitted the priſoner.

Daniel Roſe, aged 16, for beginning to deſtroy the houſe of *John Taylor*, Eſq.

Mr. Newnham declined calling evidence againſt him, on account of his youth, and the hope that he might yet be uſeful to ſociety.——The priſoner was of courſe acquitted.

Thoſe found *Guilty* were called to the Bar to receive ſentence.

Baron *Perryn* then addreſſed them in the following Speech:

" *Francis Field*, you have been convicted of felonioufly ſet-
" ting fire to the houſe of *John Taylor*, Eſq.---*John Green* and
" *Bartholomew Fiſher*, you have been found guilty of beginning
" to demoliſh the houſe of *Dr. Prieſtley*; and you, *William*
" *Hands*, have been convicted of beginning to deſtroy the
" houſe of *John Ryland*, Eſq.---Your offences, priſoners, a-
" larmed the whole kingdom.---They are novel, and of ſuch
" a nature, that you cannot expect the leaſt mercy. The ex-
" ecution of the law is but a debt of humanity, as well as juſ-
" tice, due to the public, and to preſerve in future the property
" of individuals from depredations, it is neceſſary that you
" ſhould ſuffer. All the ſervice I can now render you is, to
" entreat you to employ the ſhort time permitted you to live,
" in a manner that may enſure you a happy eternity. Remem-
" ber, unhappy and deluded men, that the certainty of death
" requires immediate repentance!

" The moſt painful part of my office now remains for me
" to perform. It is, to pronounce the ſentence, the *dreadful*
" ſentence of the law, which is, That you go from hence to
" the place from whence you came, and from thence to the
" place of execution, where you ſhall be hanged by the neck till
" you are dead; and may the Almighty, of his infinite goodneſs,
" have mercy on your ſouls."

Field and Green were executed at Warwick, purſuant to the above ſentence, on Thurſday, Sept. 8—Fiſher received a free pardon—and Hands a reſpite for fourteen days.

The two following Addreſſes have been lately preſented to the King:

To the KING's moſt excellent Majeſty.

The humble Addreſs of the High Bailiff, Clergy, and other principal Inhabitants of the Town and Neighbourhood of Birmingham.

" May it pleaſe your Majeſty,

" WE, your Majeſty's moſt dutiful and loyal ſubjects, the High Bailiff, Clergy, and other principal Inhabitants of the Town and Neighbourhood of Birmingham, deeply ſenſible of your Majeſty's paternal care of all your ſubjects, beg leave moſt humbly to approach your Royal Throne, with hearts full of gratitude for the recent inſtance of that care which your Majeſty graciouſly condeſcended to afford us during the late riots in this place, by commanding ſuch particular attention to be paid to our ſecurity, and directing ſuch ample relief for our neceſſities.

" Rejoicing alſo in every opportunity of teſtifying our loyalty to the beſt of Sovereigns, and our firm attachment to that noble fabric the Conſtitution of this country, the envy of all other nations, as it is the glory of our own; We cannot neglect this occaſion of pledging ourſelves to ſupport your Majeſty's Illuſtrious Houſe, and to defend that happy Conſtitution both in Church and State, againſt every attempt at innovation, at the riſk of every thing dear to us."

To the KING.

" Moſt Gracious Sovereign,

" WE, your Majeſty's loyal and dutiful ſubjects, the Proteſtant Diſſenters in the Town of Birmingham, beg leave to approach your Majeſty in a moment of ſerious affliction and concern, ariſing not only from our recent aggravated ſufferings, but from our painful apprehenſions leſt the calumnies of our enemies ſhould influence your Royal Mind, and inſinuate ſuſpicions of our loyalty and affection.

" Aſſured not of our innocence alone, but of our unalterable attachment to your auguſt perſon, and to the ſucceſſion of your Royal Houſe; we reſpectfully claim your Majeſty's continued protection and favour, and beg leave moſt earneſtly to aſſure your Majeſty, we have no thoughts of diſturbing the Conſtitution

tution—We are the deſcendants of thoſe to whom (as the annals of our country will teſtify) the Revolution, which ſecured to your illuſtrious houſe the crown of theſe kingdoms, was greatly indebted. The civil conſtitution of our country is our pride and our glory; which we have been taught from our infancy to revere, and which we would die to preſerve. Indeed, Sire, though deeply afflicted by the late riotous devaſtations, and by the want of energy in the civil power, yet we ſpeak from hearts that are actuated by the love of law, of peace, of order, and good government. Senſible of your Majeſty's goodneſs, in the vigorous meaſures which have been adopted for ſuppreſſing the outrages, which a lawleſs banditti were ſpreading through this place and its environs, we offer you the warmeſt tribute of our gratitude, for the happy deliverance we have experienced, by the wiſdom of the meaſures planned by your Majeſty's miniſters, and by the energy and promptitude with which they were ſo ſucceſsfully executed.

"We feel ourſelves deeply thankful to your Majeſty, for this very beneficial and deciſive inſtance of your royal attention; and likewiſe to your great goodneſs, in the meaſures which have ſince been adopted, for diſcovering and bringing to exemplary puniſhment, as well the inſtigators as the perpetrators of the late atrocious violences; and we firmly and dutifully rely upon your Majeſty for the continuance of it, as well as for the exerciſe of that candour and magnanimity, which will reſiſt the calumnies of our enemies, and continue to us that protection, favour, and confidence, to which we know ourſelves juſtly entitled.

"That your majeſty may long reign in peace and glory; that your royal honours may for ages continue to deſcend to your lateſt poſterity; and that the happineſs of Britain may proſper and improve itſelf under their auſpicious influence, is the honeſt wiſh and fervent prayers of, Sire,

"Your Majeſty's moſt loyal and dutiful ſubjects."

LETTERS, *&c. &c.*

OCCASIONED BY THE LATE RIOTS.

Dr. Prieſtley to the Inhabitants of Birmingham.

My late Townſmen and Neighbours,

AFTER living with you eleven years, in which you had uniform experience of my peaceful behaviour, in my attention

tention to the quiet ſtudies of my profeſſion, and thoſe of philoſophy, I was far from expecting the injuries which I and my friends have lately received from you. But you have been miſled. By hearing the Diſſenters, and particularly the Unitarian Diſſenters, continually railed at, as enemies to the preſent Government, in Church and State, you have been led to conſider any injury done to us as a meritorious thing; and not having been better informed, the means were not attended to. When the *object* was right, you thought the *means* could not be wrong. By the diſcourſes of your teachers, and the exclamations of your ſuperiors in general, drinking confuſion and damnation to us (which is well known to have been their frequent practice) your bigotry has been excited to the higheſt pitch, and nothing having been ſaid to you to moderate your paſſions, but every thing to inflame them; hence, without any conſideration on your part, or on theirs, who ought to have known, and taught you better—you were prepared for every ſpecies of outrage; thinking that whatever you could do to ſpite and injure us, was for the ſupport of Government, and eſpecially the Church. In *deſtroying* us, you have been led to think, *you did God* and your country the moſt ſubſtantial *ſervice*.

Happily, the minds of Engliſhmen have an horror of *murder*, and therefore you did not, I hope, think of *that*; though, by your clamorous demanding of *me* at the Hotel, it is probable, that at that time, ſome of you intended me ſome perſonal injury. But what is the value of life, when every thing is done to make it wretched. In many caſes, there would be greater mercy in diſpatching the inhabitants, than in burning their houſes. However, I infinitely prefer what I feel from *the ſpoiling of my goods*, to the diſpoſition of thoſe who have miſled you.

You have deſtroyed the moſt truly valuable and uſeful apparatus of philoſophical inſtruments that perhaps any individual, in this or any other country, was ever poſſeſſed of; in my uſe of which I annually ſpent large ſums, with no pecuniary view whatever, but only in the advancement of ſcience, for the benefit of my country, and of mankind. You have deſtroyed a library correſponding to that apparatus, which no money can re-purchaſe, except in a long courſe of time. But what I feel far more, you have deſtroyed *manuſcripts*, which have been the reſult of the laborious ſtudy of many years, and which I ſhall never be able to re-compoſe; and this has been done to one who never did, or imagined you any harm.

I know

I know nothing more of the *hand-bill*, which is ſaid to have enraged you ſo much, than any of yourſelves, and I diſapprove of it as much; though it has been made the oſtenſible handle of doing infinitely more miſchief than any thing of that nature could poſſibly have done. In the celebration of the French Revolution, at which I did not attend, the company aſſembled on the occaſion, only expreſſed their joy in the emancipation of a neighbouring nation from tyranny, without intimating a deſire of any thing more than ſuch an improvement of our own Conſtitution, as all ſober citizens, of every perſuaſion, have long wiſhed for. And though, in anſwer to the groſs and unprovoked calumnies of Mr. Madan, and others, I publicly vindicated my principles as a Diſſenter, it was only with plain and ſober argument, and with perfect good humour. We are better inſtructed in the mild and forbearing ſpirit of Chriſtianity, than ever to think of having recourſe to *violence*; and can you think ſuch conduct as yours any recommendation of your religious principles in preference to ours?

You are ſtill more miſtaken, if you imagine that this conduct of yours has any tendency to ſerve your cauſe, or to prejudice ours. It is nothing but *reaſon* and *argument* that can ever ſupport any ſyſtem of religion. Anſwer our arguments, and your buſineſs is done; but your having recourſe to *violence*, is only a proof that you have nothing better to produce. Should you deſtroy myſelf as well as my houſe, library, and apparatus, ten more perſons, of equal or ſuperior ſpirit and ability, would inſtantly riſe up. If thoſe ten were deſtroyed, an hundred would appear; and believe me, that the Church of England, which you now think you are ſupporting, has received a greater blow by this conduct of yours, than I and all my friends have ever aimed at it.

Beſides, to abuſe thoſe who have no power of making reſiſtance, is equally cowardly and brutal, peculiarly unworthy of Engliſhmen, to ſay nothing of Chriſtianity, which teaches us to do as we would be done by. In this buſineſs we are the ſheep, and you the wolves. We will preſerve our character, and hope you will change yours. At all events, we return you bleſſings for curſes; and pray that you may ſoon return to that induſtry, and thoſe ſober manners, for which the inhabitants of Birmingham were formerly diſtinguiſhed.

I am your ſincere well-wiſher,

London, July 19, 1791. J. PRIESTLEY.

J. Keir, Eſq. to the Printer of the Birmingham and Stafford Chronicle.

Mr. Printer,

AS I find that many groſs falſhoods have been circulated through the country, in order to inflame the minds of the people concerning the meeting held laſt Thurſday, to commemorate the French Revolution, I will beg leave to ſtate what I myſelf have had occaſion to know reſpecting that ſubject.—Some gentlemen in Birmingham had propoſed by an advertiſement in the newſpapers, to hold a meeting of the friends of liberty and of mankind, at the Hotel, to commemorate the French Revolution, in the ſame manner as was done in London, and many other parts in the kingdom. Two days before the time appointed for this meeting, a very reſpectable gentleman called on me, and ſaid he came to tell me, that it was the general wiſh of thoſe who intended to meet, that I ſhould be their chairman on the occaſion. I accepted the compliment, and promiſed to come to Birmingham to attend, never conceiving that a peaceable meeting, for the purpoſe of rejoicing that twenty-ſix millions of our fellow-creatures were reſcued from deſpotiſm, and made as free and happy as we Britons are, could be miſinterpreted as being offenſive to a government, whoſe greateſt boaſt is liberty, or to any who profeſs the chriſtian religion, which orders us to love our neighbours as ourſelves.—We accordingly met and dined with the greateſt peace and harmony, and after drinking ſome toaſts, expreſſive in the firſt place of our loyalty to our own *King* and *Conſtitution*; and in the ſecond place, of our joy at the happineſs which the French have acquired by their new Conſtitution, we diſſolved the meeting entirely, in the greateſt order, between five and ſix in the evening, and quitted the Hotel, every man retiring ſeparately to his home, or to his private affairs. I returned to my houſe in the country, nor knew of the diſturbances till next day. The meeting in London was conducted with the ſame decorum, nor has there been an inſtance, as far as I know, in the many ſimilar meetings throughout England, of the ſmalleſt irregularity attempted by them. Now, Mr. Printer, as actions are the beſt interpreters of men's intentions, it is evident that the malicious inſinuations, that theſe meetings were intended to diſturb the peace and government of the country, have been by the event proved to be falſe and groundleſs.

I have lately heard that it is reported that we drank diſloyal and

and ſeditious toaſts. Now the very firſt toaſt that was given was, *The King and the Conſtitution.* I do not know any words in the Engliſh language expreſſive of greater loyalty; and one of the laſt was, *Peace and good-will to all mankind*, which cannot eaſily be interpreted to excite people to tumult. I ſhall hereafter publiſh a liſt of all the toaſts, which were altogether in the ſame ſpirit of loyalty, peace, and charity.

A ſecond report is, that Juſtice Carles was inſulted and turned out of the room. The fact is, that Juſtice Carles never was in the room, and therefore it is not eaſy to conceive how he could be turned out. I will add, that I have not the ſmalleſt doubt, that if that gentleman had come, he would have been received with due reſpect.

A third falſe report was, that a ſeditious hand-bill had been diſtributed by the members of the meeting, on ſome preceding day. A ſeditious and truly infamous hand-bill had been diſtributed, it is true, but by whom written or diſtributed is not known. It is heartily to be wiſhed that the perſons concerned may be diſcovered, and puniſhed according to law. As ſoon as the gentlemen of Birmingham, who had concerted the Commemoration Meeting, ſaw this hand-bill, they perceived that the effect, and perhaps the intention of it, was to inflame the mob againſt them, and they immediately publiſhed in the Thurſday's newſpaper, an advertiſement declaring their diſavowal of this hand-bill, and their own loyal attachment to the *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons**. They alſo ſent hand-bills with copies of this advertiſement all over Birmingham. It was not poſſible for them to do any thing more effectual to prevent any bad effects from this ſeditious paper, or to reſcue themſelves from the calumny of their being the authors of it.

The laſt falſe report that I have heard relative to that meeting is concerning Dr. Prieſtley's behaviour there. To this I ſuppoſe it will be ſufficient to anſwer, that *Dr. Prieſtley was not preſent.*

Theſe are all the reports which I have heard, but I doubt not there may be many others, of the truth of which every man of common ſenſe will judge from what I have ſaid of thoſe which have come to my knowledge. Nevertheleſs, theſe falſe reports are all the pretences for the late horrible riots; but the event ſhews that they were only *pretences*, and that the Diſſenters were the true object of the fury of the mob, as many of thoſe gentlemen who have ſuffered from the riots were not preſent.

* See Page 4.

For

For the buſineſs of the Commemoration meetings had nothing to do with religious diſtinctions, and were in other parts compoſed of churchmen, catholics, and diſſenters. It is true, that in Birmingham, the majority were diſſenters; but it is evident that they did not wiſh it to be diſtinguiſhed as a party meeting, when they did me the honour to chuſe me as their chairman, who, it was evident, muſt have conformed, in order to qualify myſelf for the commiſſions which I have held in the army, to all the formalities preſcribed by the Teſt Act, and who never was preſent in a diſſenting meeting above once or twice in England; although I have the greateſt regard for the diſſenting individuals whom I know, among whom are ſeveral of the late unfortunate victims, men as peaceable, reſpectable, and loyal as any in the kingdom. But as the ſubject of the commemoration meeting was quite unknown to the ignorant part of the people, it gave an opportunity of raiſing any lies that were neceſſary to inflame the mob to execute their horrid purpoſes.—But that the proceedings of the meeting were innocent, peaceable, and honourable, and alſo free from every ſubject relative to religious parties, I ſolemnly affirm. I am, Mr. Printer,

Yours, &c. JAMES KEIR.

Weſt Bromwich, July 20, 1791.

J. Keir, Eſq. to the Printer of the Birmingham Gazette.

Mr. Printer,

I BEG leave to acquaint the public with the proceedings of the meeting, held at the Hotel, on the Fourteenth of July, for celebrating the French Revolution. As the toaſts then drank have been wonderfully miſrepreſented, and brought into more conſequence by the late riots than they otherwiſe would merit, I think it neceſſary to add ſuch remarks as may be requiſite to ſhew their true ſpirit and intent.

Eighty-one gentlemen, inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood, met at the great room in the Hotel, where they dined and paſſed the afternoon, with that ſocial, temperate, and benevolent feſtivity, which the conſideration of the great event, that has diffuſed happineſs and liberty among a large portion of the human race, inſpired.

It is but juſtice to the liberality and public ſpirit of an ingenious artiſt of this town, to mention, that he decorated the room upon this occaſion, with three elegant emblematic pieces of ſculpture,

ſculpture, mixed with painting, in a new ſtyle of compoſition. The central piece was a finely executed medallion of his *Majeſty, encircled with a glory*, on each ſide of which was an alabaſter obeliſk; one exhibiting *Gallic liberty* breaking the bonds of deſpotiſm, and the other repreſenting *Britiſh liberty* in its preſent enjoyment.

The following toaſts were drank, and were agreeably intermixed with ſongs, compoſed and ſung by ſome of the company.

1. The King and Conſtitution.

It is the duty of all loyal ſubjects to ſupport the Conſtitution, as it is, even if there be ſome leſs perfect parts in which a reformation may be wiſhed. But ſuch a reformation ought to be wiſhed to take place by legal means, and not by tumults. It was with the ſame view of reprobating all thoughts of introducing reformations by violence, that I had occaſion, in a former publication *, to remark upon Mr. Burke's pamphlet, that if he vilified the French Revolution in order to deter us from following the ſame example, his fears were unneceſſary; becauſe, "Happily the ſame neceſſity does not exiſt in this country. For although our government may not be the beſt *poſſible*, it is certainly too good to riſk any public convulſion, in hopes of a better, or to attempt any other change than ſuch as may naturally follow from the progreſſive advancement and extenſion of knowledge among the people, by which our conſtitution may rather be reſtored to its true principles, which are excellent, and farther improved and adapted to the cultivated genius of the age, than altered or overturned." Theſe, then, were the ſentiments which I declared and avowed in a time of more deliberation, and before the preſent occaſion could ſuggeſt them; namely, that the principles of our conſtitution are excellent; and that the only reformation wanted, is ſuch as ſhall reſtore the conſtitution to theſe principles, but ſhall not alter or overturn it; and that no reformation ought to be attempted by violence. If any one aſk, what are theſe principles of the conſtitution that are excellent? I anſwer, it is the diviſion of the ſovereign power into three independent eſtates, King, Lords, and Repreſentatives of the people. Theſe principles require that the repreſentation of the people ſhould be equal, that is, that equal numbers ſhould ſend an equal number of members to parliament; and upon theſe principles the conſtitution was originally formed; but the changes which time has introduced has unhinged all this equa-

* Life of Mr. Day.

lity.

lity. Old Sarum, now reduced to a ſingle houſe, ſends two members, while Birmingham, as a town with its 70,000 inhabitants, ſends no repreſentative. Little boroughs will generally ſell their votes to the beſt bidder: large bodies of men cannot be bribed. A more equal repreſentation is the only means of obtaining a more independent parliament, and has always been the object which the moſt independent and patriotic men in every part of England have endeavoured to obtain by petitions and remonſtrances to parliament, but hitherto without ſucceſs.

2. *The proſperity and immortality of the glorious ſyſtem of Government ratified in the Champ de Mars on the ever memorable 14th of July, 1790.

3. The National Aſſembly and Patriots of France, whoſe virtue and wiſdom have raiſed twenty-ſix millions from the mean condition of ſubjects of deſpotiſm, to the dignity and happineſs of freemen.

4. The majeſty of the people.

By this expreſſion is meant the dignity and importance of the people, for whoſe good all governments ought to be inſtituted. The majeſty of the people is a parliamentary expreſſion.

5. May the New Conſtitution of France be rendered perfect and perpetual.

It is to be hoped that the French may improve their preſent conſtitution, the principal imperfection of which is the circumſtance in which it differs from ours, namely, the want of a third eſtate, or houſe of Lords, to hold a balance between the King and the People. I wiſh to ſhew that the opinions delivered here are not ſuggeſted on this occaſion, and I therefore muſt beg leave to add another quotation from my late publication (The Life of Mr. Day.) "Although the eſſential preliminaries to the firm eſtabliſhment of a free conſtitution in France have been accompliſhed, much yet remains to be done towards its completion; and for this purpoſe, time and ſecurity are requiſite.—Whatever judgment then we can form at preſent may be premature. Perhaps the apparently too democratic ſpirit of the preſent ſyſtem may be hereafter qualified by the inſtitution of a Senate or permanent Magiſtracy, ſimiliar in its effects to our Houſe of Peers, to whom ſuch privileges may be granted as ſhall be neceſſary for their independence, not as nobles, but as a body forming an eſſential part of the ſtate; who, by poiſing the powers of the crown, and of the people, and by forming

* This Toaſt was not inſerted in the original liſt, but was written on a ſeparate piece of paper by the gentleman who propoſed it. When Mr. Ruſſel found it neceſſary to publiſh the Toaſts in a London paper, he was obliged to omit this Toaſt, becauſe he had not a copy of it, not having been inſerted in the original liſt.

a barrier between the executive and legiſlative authorities, may keep theſe diſtinct, and give to the whole government, the ſtability and dignity becoming a great empire."

As the French give a free ſcope to their reaſon in political diſcuſſions, not yet being divided into parties which have intereſts different from the general intereſt, we may hope at leaſt for a greater perfection of the French conſtitution than has hitherto been ſeen, not only for a further extenſion and ſecurity of the happineſs of that great people, but alſo that the governments of other nations, ſeeing the good effects of their inſtitutions, may adopt whatever is wanting to render their own more perfect. With this view the following words had been added to the toaſt, " as a glorious example to all ages and nations;" but I did not pronounce them from the chair, from a notion which then ſtruck me, that among ſo great a number, ſome people might be ſo inaccurate as not to diſtinguiſh that the example is not propoſed in the preſent imperfect ſtate of the French conſtitution, but in the *perfect* ſtate which does not exiſt, but is the object of the wiſh of the toaſt. From the circumſtances that I have pointed out, in which the French conſtitution is inferior to our own, as well as from many other conſiderations, although I admire the French Revolution as a French Revolution, I heartily deprecate its imitation in Great Britain and Ireland.

6. May Great Britain, Ireland, and France, unite in perpetual friendſhip, and may their only rivalſhip be in the extenſion of peace and liberty, wiſdom and virtue.

7. The rights of Man. May all nations have the wiſdom to underſtand, and the courage to aſſert and defend them.

The rights of man extend to a freedom in every thing which does not interfere with the rights of his neighbour, or the good of the community, as expreſſed by law. It is clear, then, that they do not extend to the pulling down and burning of other men's houſes.

8. The true friends of the conſtitution of this country; who wiſh to preſerve its ſpirit, by correcting its abuſes.

The principal abuſe is the unequal diſtribution of the power of electing members of Parliament, as was before obſerved.

9. May the people of England never ceaſe to remonſtrate, till their Parliament becomes a true National Repreſentation.

Nothing can more fully ſhew the orderly and loyal ſenſe of the meeting, than this toaſt, which expreſſes, that however unremitting we ſhould be in our endeavours to procure a reform

in

in the repreſentation of the people, it is only by *remonſtrating*, that theſe endeavours are to be executed.

10. The Prince of Wales. May he have the wiſdom to prefer the glory of being the chief of an entire and free people, to that of being the ſplendid fountain of corruption.

Although this toaſt has no reference whatever to the paſt or preſent times, and expreſſes only a wiſh that in ſome future time, when it ſhall pleaſe God, in the ordinary courſe of nature, to call the Prince to his inheritance, he may have the wiſdom to prefer good to evil; and that then, or before that time, the Parliament may have granted, what the friends of Liberty have ſo often petitioned, a more perfect repreſentation of the people, by means of which they will be the true and uncorrupt repreſentatives of the entire nation, and the King will preſide there as chief, with a ſplendour and dignity which a partial repreſentation cannot give: it may nevertheleſs be not improper here to ſay ſomething of that corruption, which has been often imputed to miniſters, ſince the Revolution under King William; that is, the practice of beſtowing places, penſions, honours, and other emoluments in the gift of the crown, for the purpoſe of obtaining influence and majorities in Parliament.—Before the Revolution, Kings governed by prerogative. When that was circumſcribed, miniſters found that they could not carry on the meaſures of Government without the conſent of Parliament, and that majorities were not always to be gained, without acquiring an influence by the choice which the Conſtitution gave them in the diſpoſal of the favours of the crown. The fault then was evidently not in the miniſters, but in the repreſentatives, the majority of whom being choſen by little boroughs, inſtead of the great body of the people, rendered this influence neceſſary. Some political writers maintain, that influence is an admirable ſyſtem of government: and it muſt be confeſſed that no nation ever enjoyed more liberty and happineſs than this has done for the paſt century. But every thing in this world has its limits. We have the authority of the celebrated vote of a Houſe of Commons for ſaying, "that the influence of the crown has encreaſed, is encreaſing, and ought to be diminiſhed." According to this progreſſion, may we not fear that unleſs ſome ſtop be put to it, in ſome future time, the crown may become what the toaſt deprecates, a ſplendid fountain of corruption. In the year 1780, aſſociations were formed of the moſt patriotic and independent gentlemen in different counties of England, to obtain a reform in Parliament,

as the only remedy againſt this encreaſing evil. To give an idea of the corruption which then prevailed, it may not be improper to quote a paſſage of a memorial drawn up by the deputies of the county of York, Surrey, Middleſex, Glouceſter, Hertford, Kent, Huntingdon, Dorſet, Bucks, Cheſter, Devon, and Eſſex. "We are now arrived (ſaid theſe deputies) at the criſis which the wiſeſt of political writers have uniformly marked for the downfall of Britain," when the legiſlative body ſhall become as corrupt as the executive, and dependent upon it.— "Let any man look back to the laws which have paſſed only in the ten laſt ſeſſions of Parliament, forming, as it were, ſtep by ſtep, a code of prerogative, and then doubt if the executive has not found its way to the corruption of the legiſlative. Let him behold a venal majority in the Houſe of Commons, ſeſſion after ſeſſion, moving obſequious to the nod of the miniſter, and giving the legiſlative ſanction to propoſitions not only big with the fate of their country, but often militating againſt the firſt principles of the conſtitution, and the declared voice of their conſtituents; and then let him judge how enormous that corruption muſt be." It is well known that Mr. Pitt, his Majeſty's preſent miniſter, wrote to the chairman of theſe deputies, the Rev. Mr. Wyvill, promiſing to move the Houſe of Commons for a reform in the Parliamentary Repreſentation, which promiſe he fulfilled, but though he was then miniſter, could not gain a majority. The time may nevertheleſs arrive, and what better omen can there be than the concurrence of the two heads of our political parts, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, in this great queſtion. Soon may it arrive to gild the ſetting ſun of the preſent reign, and be the glory of every ſucceeding one! *

11. The United States of America. May they for ever enjoy the Liberty which they have ſo honourably acquired.

12. May the late Revolution in Poland prove the harbinger of a more perfect ſyſtem of Liberty, extending to that great kingdom.

13. May the nations of Europe become ſo enlightened, as never to be deluded into ſavage wars, by the mad ambition of their rulers.

* In the liſt of Toaſts publiſhed in the London papers by Mr. Ruſſell, this toaſt is given, "The Prince of Wales," without the additional ſentence. This difference ariſes from a miſtake of mine. The toaſt in the original liſt, was as Mr. Ruſſell has given it. The additional ſentence was propoſed, and written in the Chairman's liſt, but upon re-conſideration it was ordered to be omitted, but forgot to be expunged; and in the hurry of the day, I pronounced it, by an unintentional miſtake, for which I beg the indulgence of the gentlemen who directed the toaſts. The additional ſentence had never been inſerted in Mr. Ruſſell's liſt, and he therefore could not give it in London.

14. May

14. May the ſword never be unſheathed but for the defence and liberty of our country, and then may every man caſt away the ſcabbard, until the people are ſafe and free.

The man who will not fight in defence of his country, does not deſerve the protection of it; and he who will not fight for liberty, deſerves to be a ſlave—excepting thoſe always, whoſe conſcience forbids them to fight.

15. To the glorious memory of Hampden and Sydney, and other heroes, of all ages and nations, who have fought and bled for Liberty.

16. To the memory of Dr. Price, and of all thoſe illuſtrious ſages who have enlightened mankind on the true principles of civil ſociety.

17. Peace and good-will to all mankind.

An admirable text, and I wiſh the chriſtian preachers of all denominations would enforce it with all their eloquence. Let us remember that Churchmen and Diſſenters are all made in the ſame mould, and ſubject to the ſame paſſions, and that the differences ariſe from education and accident; let us remember that the animoſities among the good people of all parties, ariſe from the miſconception of each other; let us all conſpire in acquiring the ſentiments expreſſed in the toaſt, and when once acquired, we ſhall certainly never abandon them.

18. Proſperity to the Town of Birmingham.

19. A happy meeting to all the friends of liberty, on the 14th of July, 1792.

I am, Mr. Printer, yours, &c.

July 24, 1791. JAMES KEIR.

To Meſſrs. Prieſtley and Ruſſell.

YOU have both ventured a letter each in the public papers on the late dreadful riots, which have been committed in the Town of Birmingham, in order, I ſuppoſe, to excite commiſeration for your ſituations, and to divert the public eye from yourſelves to others, as the ſuppoſed cauſe of all thoſe riots.—— The minds of men are by this time cooled a little—and in anſwer to your artful and wicked inſinuations, I hope to prove to every diſpaſſionate perſon in the kingdom, that you yourſelves may be conſidered as the *real* cauſe of that mob, and thoſe riots you ſo much complain of.

Your letter, *good* Doctor, opens with an appeal to the *uniform experience the town has had of your peaceful behaviour, and attention to the quiet ſtudies of your profeſſion, for the eleven years*

you have reſided near it.—Now it is notorious—that the town of Birmingham had enjoyed an uninterrupted ſcene of peace and happineſs for more than fifty years: Every thing in it moved in perfect harmony and order, till you, like a noxious planet, approached towards it. Religious differences and diviſions were few (from your own writings I can prove this) till *you* came to ſow the ſeeds of diſſenſion by your peſtilential publications, and unfounded doctrines from the pulpit.—You have endeavoured to unhinge the minds of the people—to alienate their affections from government—from religious obſervances on the eſtabliſhed church—from every attention and reſpect due to their appointed teachers and paſtors—and to perplex their minds with ſubtle diſputes on religious doctrines, in which your own creed, by your own confeſſion, is not yet fixed.——Theſe practices, you are conſcious, have been your daily buſineſs—and yet you have the impudence to appeal to the uniform experience of the town of Birmingham for your *peaceful* behaviour, and attention to your *quiet* ſtudies.—In proof of what has been ſaid—I appeal to your own writings, to your unwearied attacks upon governors and our preſent eſtabliſhed government—to your illiberal abuſe of the whole body of the clergy—and I appeal not only to the town of Birmingham in general—but even to the more moderate diſſenters there, who, I underſtand, at preſent impute all their ſufferings to the violence and impetuoſity of your nature, and the well-known reſtleſs ſpirit of your *buſy Friend.*

To ſay, that the mob was miſled, and their bigotry excited to the higheſt pitch, by hearing the diſſenters railed at, and that the diſcourſes of the clergy have led the people to think, that in *deſtroying you*, they did *God ſervice*, is a bold and falſe aſſertion, without the leaſt proof or truth.—And as you, Doctor, are, I underſtand, of ſo weak and irritable a nature, that the leaſt contradiction agitates your whole frame, let me recommend it to you for your own peace of mind, to conſult a little the truth of facts, before you make another attempt like this to impoſe upon the world—impoſe you cannot on the inhabitants of Birmingham, who know the *reverſe* of what *you* aſſert to be the direct fact.—Conſidering the moſt violent and outrageous attacks you have made of late upon all eſtabliſhments, and your eternal workings to undermine the church—a clergyman reſident in the town of Birmingham would be wanting ſurely in the duties of his office, and in his regard to that church he is bound to ſerve, who ſuffered your unprovoked inſolence

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and calumnies to paſs unnoticed and unmarked—but the truth is, I believe, Doctor, that the clergy of Birmingham are a mild and peaceable ſet of men, who regard more the common duties of their office than your virulent abuſe, which cannot move their anger, however it might excite their pity or contempt.—The people, you ſay, have been miſled—but pray who has endeavoured to miſlead them? Who? but Dr. Prieſtley—by his conſtant railing at the preſent government, both in church and ſtate. *Who* has conſtantly taught that the *deſtruction of us* is a right object, and that the *means* could not be wrong, even the means of a *gun-powder* plot? The world knows it is Dr. Prieſtley.—*Who*, by his writings and diſcourſes has endeavoured to excite and inflame the paſſions of the people, and prepare them for every ſpecies of outrage—but Dr. Prieſtley?—*Who* has led the people to think that in deſtroying the eſtabliſhed church, they did God and their country the moſt ſubſtantial ſervice? Who? but Dr. Prieſtley—in his Familiar Letters, his Anſwer and Preface to Mr. Burn, &c. &c.—*You had digged a pit, and are fallen into the midſt of it yourſelf. In the net which you hid privily, is your foot taken—you are trapped in the work of your own hands—and the miſchief you had imagined againſt another, is fallen upon your own head.* You muſt have underſtood very well, and felt the power of theſe wicked arts, to have been enabled with ſo much readineſs to have attributed them to others.

Whether your conſcience tells you that you deſerve death, I know not—but by your words 'tis clear, that the misfortune of loſing you, though of ſuch ſervice, *in your own opinion*, to ſociety in general, would have been nothing in compariſon of the many outrages committed on private property and effects.—And we entirely agree with you, Doctor.

The ſufferings of a *good man* every one partakes of and laments—and thoſe of Mr. *Taylor* and Mr. *Ryland*, in particular, and of others whoſe effects fell a ſacrifice to the violences of the mob, are very generally lamented—but the ſufferings of thoſe who inſtigate evil that over-reaches themſelves, carry too much the appearance of *deſerved puniſhment* to excite commiſeration.—You, Sir, in moſt modeſt language, have deſcribed your ſufferings to be very great, in the deſtruction of the firſt and moſt uſeful apparatus of philoſophical inſtruments that any man in this or any other country was ever poſſeſſed of.—Our feelings for you on this head would have been greater, had this deſcription come from ſome other hand than your own.—In the

loſs of your *manuſcripts*, there are ſome who think, that the misfortune of loſing *one* part, is ſomewhat compenſated in the deſtruction of *another*.

You deny any concern in the *hand bill*. No one, that I hear, has proved it upon you. Some, however, *did think*, it bore a ſtriking *ſimilarity* to your *uſual* language.

The world only ſmiles at your palliation of yourſelf, in ſaying, that you did not attend the celebration of the French Revolution. Being well acquainted with your principles, we are not at a loſs for your meaning. No one is ſurprized at your revengeful introduction of Mr. *Madan*'s name. As he told you that you ſmarted under the laſh of a ſuperior hand, ſo we think you at preſent ſmart under the laſh of *his telling you ſo*.—You are always very kind in your advice to *us*, how *we* are to direct our conduct, and what modes we are to take to ſerve our cauſe. We thank even an *enemy* for his advice—*when it is well meant*.

To whom now, Sir, in this letter of yours, have you been addreſſing yourſelf? To the inhabitants, I think, of the town of Birmingham.—And are you not aſhamed to endeavour thus to aſperſe their characters in the world, when it is ſo true, that every nerve was exerted, both by the laity and clergy of the eſtabliſhed church (to their honour be it mentioned) even at the hazard of their own lives and properties, to ſave and protect the property of the diſſenters in the late riots. Have you no gratitude in you? If *you* have not, the *body of the diſſenters have* —and their public thanks to the laity and clergy of the eſtabliſhed church, in the Birmingham paper of the 25th of July, gave the directeſt contradiction to the whole catalogue of your moſt wicked inſinuations and unfounded aſſertions.

You are a ſtrong Revolutioniſt we all know.—For God's ſake, for ours, and *your own*, ſince you reverence ſo much the Revolution ſyſtem, get off for France. The people of Birmingham never wiſh more to ſee or hear of you, and England, I am ſure, will be very glad to get rid of ſo troubleſome a character. Your letter needed not the ſignature of *Prieſtley*.—Every one acquainted with the ſhameful, unqualified, and undignified manner in which you write in general, muſt know the hand from whence this came. The ſame mode of ſhuffling, miſinterpreting, ſhifting, twiſting, and uniform ſyſtem of falſe ſtatements, pervade every publication that comes from you.—Every man may now judge what reliance is to be placed on your *ſcripture* interpretations, from the ſpecimen you have given us

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of your powers of perverſion in the letter now before us.—*Quocunque modo* is your motto, when you have a point to carry.

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To you, Mr. RUSSELL, my addreſs will be very ſhort. You are not of conſequence ſufficient to attract the public notice; and you are but the *bell-mouth* of Dr. Prieſtley. He probably compoſed what you and Mr. *Keir* have ſet your names to. You have been pleaſed, however, to vouch for *that* in the moſt ſolemn manner, which I affirm to be a direct *falſehood*. Before you ventured to publiſh *Toaſts** given at your meeting, it was your buſineſs to be acquainted (and indeed *you muſt have been acquainted*, Mr. Ruſſell) with thoſe toaſts in their full extent. Otherwiſe you aver that, which you cannot know to be true. Now Mr. *Keir*'s own publication of the toaſts ſince your letter appeared proves you to have been guilty of a groſs falſehood.—The fact is, you were aſhamed (as you ought to be) of *ſome* of your toaſts, and you publiſhed, therefore, only a *part*, and that a *mutilated* one, hoping to eſcape detection. Unluckily for you and your party, we have as correct a copy as your worthy chairman, Mr. *Keir*—and I am told that even *he* has kept back ſome, and varied others; but this I affirm not on my own knowledge.—His letter is the moſt *jeſuitical* comment on a *preſbyterian* performance, I ever ſaw.

You are brought to ſhame (though I give you too much credit, by ſuppoſing you poſſeſſed of any) for *one* falſehood.

Your repreſentation of your conference with Mr. Dadley, the Maſter of the Hotel, carries with it *another* falſehood.

You would repreſent yourſelf and friends on this occaſion, as taking every precaution, and lay the blame, in part, on poor Mr. Dadley, who is a very *innocent* and good kind of man, for aſſuring you, there would be no danger of any tumult, *if you took care only to break up early*.

Come forward, now, Sir, and deny the charge againſt you, if you can. You were the very man, who declared, in the moſt peremptory language, on a repreſentation of the danger likely to enſue, that there *ſhould* be a dinner; that if you ſat

* Mr. Ruſſell's letter reſpecting the Toaſts (publiſhed in London) is purpoſely omitted, as Mr. Keir has written ſo fully on that ſubject, and clearly accounts for Mr. Ruſſell's inaccuracy in the ſtatement of ſome of them, which is noticed with ſo much aſperity by this Lover of Truth.—Whether the declaration of Mr. Ruſſell, reſpecting Mr. Dadley, is to be credited in preference to the ASSERTION of an anonymous writer, is ſubmitted to the Reader's conſideration.——COMPILER.

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down alone you would inſiſt on it, and would be reſponſible for all conſequences.——I leave you now, Sir, to make the beſt of theſe *charges* of *falſehood* againſt you—and to convince the world, if you can, that you and your party may not be conſidered as the *real* authors, by your obſtinate perſeverance in your meeting, againſt the ſober cautions and general alarm of the whole town of Birmingham, of all thoſe *dreadful riots* that enſued. I am, Meſſieurs, NOT the Button Burniſher, but,

A Lover of Truth.

A ſhort Reply to Dr. Prieſtley.

SIR,

YOU have appealed to the Publlc in vindication of your conduct, and lamented your loſſes with the feelings of a man; they are great, becauſe in one reſpect irreparable.

But whilſt I join with the public in regretting the deſtruction of your philoſophical property, it pains me to aver that you have not proved your political innocence.

You and your friends have been charged as enemies to the preſent ſyſtem of Government: let us examine how you attempt to diſprove that aſſertion.

You ſay, that your friends met to expreſs their joy at the French Revolution, and to intimate a deſire that an improvement ſhould take place in our Conſtitution.

Does the inference to be drawn from this, prove you, and thoſe of your perſuaſion, to be friends to the preſent eſtabliſhed Government?—Surely not.

By celebrating the French Revolution, you give your ſanction, to the ſyſtem adopted in that country. If you did not ſanction, you would celebrate: and by deſiring an improvement, at the ſame moment, in the Britiſh Conſtitution, you declare yourſelf inimical to our Government in its preſent form. He who is inimical to any matter, cannot be a friend; and the oppoſite to that character is, of courſe, an enemy. Your letter has afforded me theſe premiſes, and the concluſion is fairly drawn from that which is fully eſtabliſhed.

It is not your religious, but your political ſentiments which are thought dangerous to the State. The Preſbyterians certainly approve the conduct of that uſurped authority which decolated the unhappy CHARLES. Our Conſtitution conſiders that bloody act of common-wealth tyranny, to be a martyrdom.

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The difference in political ſentiment on this great point, can therefore never be reconciled. It is as oppoſite as Monarchy and Republicaniſm can make it. Were I to aſk you, if the doctrine laid down by Mr. Paine in his *Rights of Man*, coincided with your principles?—you would certainly ſay that "it does." You cannot ſucceſsfully controvert that aſſertion.

Now, Sir, this publication of Mr. Paine's is a groſs libel upon the ſpirit and letter of the Britiſh Conſtitution, and as it is received into your community as a political truth, and that in approving ſuch doctrine, you and your friends cannot diſapprove the French Revolution, I wiſh to know what ſort of amendment you would make to the Britiſh Government?

You have made a diſtinction in your letter, between the conſtitutional ſubjects of Great Britain and your ſect, You divide them by ſaying, "our cauſe," and "your cauſe." The conſtitutional ſubjects' *cauſe*, is the preſent Government in Church and State,—your cauſe muſt be the oppoſite to that;—and therefore it is ſome other kind of Government in Church and State; and though you have not directly ſaid that you ever attacked the State, you fairly acknowledge to have given our Church A BLOW:—Your words are, "The Church of Eng-"land, which you now think you are ſupporting, has received "a greater blow by this conduct, than I and all my friends "*have ever aimed at it.*" This is a direct avowal that you and your friends have aimed a blow at our religious rights.

Do you call this *peaceably* following your ſtudies as a Miniſter of the Goſpel and a Philoſopher?—No, Mr. Prieſtley, it is ſuch kind of turbulent conduct that has brought you and your friends into the preſent ſituation.

Had you, Sir, and thoſe of your perſuaſion, quietly attended the duties of your reſpective ſtations, and left the Proteſtant Church and the Britiſh Government to the care of thoſe who are appointed by the Conſtitution, as Repreſentatives of the People, to guard and protect them; you might have enjoyed that eaſe, happineſs and peace which every good ſubject is entitled to expect from the excellence of our laws, and the honour and integrity of thoſe men who compoſe the three branches of the Legiſlature.

JOHN CHURCHMAN*.

July 20, 1791.

* An admirable Reply to this Letter has been publiſhed by Swinney and Co. Birmingham. Price 6d.

To

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Birmingham.

Friends and Fellow Townſmen,

IT is with extreme concern and reluctance that I offer a few remarks on the letter which has lately been addreſſed to us, in ſeveral London papers, under the ſignature of Dr. Prieſtley.

He complains of the injuries ſuſtained by himſelf, and other very reſpectable individuals, in the late riots. The calamity has indeed been great; and while every benevolent mind muſt feel deeply for the ſufferers, he will at the ſame time condemn without reſerve the injuſtice and barbarity of thoſe who have either ſecretly encouraged, or by open violence perpetrated ſuch deeds of cruelty.

You, my friends, will, I am ſure, join with me, in hoping that, if there be in this town, or in his Majeſty's dominions, a wretch ſo intirely loſt to every ſenſe of humanity and juſtice as to concert this plan of villainy; or, under any pretext whatever to put it into execution—that ſuch a miſcreant may be purſued till overtaken by the vigilance of juſtice, and rewarded according to his foul deſerts.

With theſe ſentiments (which I am perſuaded are common to my Townſmen on this occaſion) you muſt ſuppoſe, my friends, I felt as you do, a mixture of ſurpriſe and indignation, at being told by Dr. Prieſtley, and in a tone of the graveſt confidence too, that, theſe outrages are to be aſcribed to "the Diſcourſes of our Teachers," (meaning, no doubt, the acting Clergy) as well as to the conduct of ſome of our "ſuperiors," who are well known to have made a practice of "drinking damnation to the Diſſenters," &c.

Who theſe our ſuperiors are, who can allow themſelves in ſuch habits of indecency and profaneneſs, I profeſs myſelf very happy in not knowing;—but of the conduct of our teachers, long obſervation and experience, have taught me ſomething; and to this I can ſpeak explicitly.

I am fully aware, with you, my friends, that the preſent is a very delicate conjuncture, and that every precaution ſhould be taken to allay, rather than to excite, or increaſe, the very unhappy reſentments which the late diſorders have produced. I can, at the ſame time, allow to the feelings of an injured man every thing that can reaſonably be demanded in apology for Dr. Prieſtley on this occaſion. Juſtice, however, to the character

character of a body of men whom their known moderation (in ſo critical a ſituation as this has been for ſome years paſt) obliges me to reſpect—common juſtice will not allow me to conceal my opinion, that the method taken by that gentleman in his addreſs to us, is far, very far indeed, from being calculated to meliorate our preſent evils, or to heal our breaches.

You muſt be conſcious, my Townſmen, that with reſpect to the clergy in general, the repreſentation of their conduct given by Dr. Prieſtley, is in itſelf a calumny which no part of their practice will juſtify, or has in any wiſe provoked. If in defending their own principles, his have been occaſionally glanced at, or openly attacked, we, my friends, have not conſidered this as neceſſarily, nor at all, involving an attack on Dr. Prieſtley's perſons. We have merely looked upon our teacher as diſcharging a duty which, from the general integrity of their conduct, we have good reaſon to believe, the clear and full conviction of their conſciences, ſtrengthened by the moſt ſolemn obligations their office required them to perform. But will a conduct like this (innocent and praiſe-worthy as it muſt appear to every man who thinks the truths of religion worth contending for) juſtify Dr. Prieſtley in holding our teachers up to the world as calumniators, movers of popular tumult, and even as incendiaries! If it will not, we aſk, in what light Dr. Prieſtley's conduct muſt appear in the eyes of all Europe?

Let him calmly review his Letter to the Miniſter—let him ſeriouſly revolve thoſe extraordinary ſpecimens of plain argument and perfect good temper, his Familiar Addreſſes to us; and before he cloſes the review, let him call to mind a certain *preface*, never to be forgotten, of which one of our teachers was *accidentally* the occaſion; and if he muſt ſtill perſiſt in charging the late diſturbances on the diſcourſes, preached or publiſhed of individuals; we entreat him, in the preſence of the great ſearcher of hearts, to conſider, to whoſe diſcourſes thoſe public diſorders are moſt reaſonably to be aſcribed, to his own, or thoſe of our teachers.

We, who are certainly the beſt judges of what their conduct has been with reference to Dr. Prieſtley, are witneſſes for them, that in whatever abhorrence they may hold ſome of his opinions; with regard to his perſon, or thoſe of diſſenters in general, the tendency of their public diſcourſes has been in direct contradiction to the very unbecoming, and we muſt, in juſtice to our feelings, add, cruel repreſentation given of it by Dr. Prieſtley. Had their conduct really been what Dr. Prieſtley ſtates

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in his addreſs, it could not have eſcaped us, that in acting thus, our teachers muſt not only have been guilty of miſrepreſenting his ſentiments, but muſt alſo have ſhamefully forgotten their own;—theſe, we are ſure, inculcate nothing but peace on earth and good will to men.

Under ſo foul an aſperſion, introduced with ſuch artleſs addreſs and ſimple confidence, as were moſt likely to obtain it credit; and thrown into ſuch a variety of channels as were ſure to give it notoriety in every part of the kingdom:—we congratulate our teachers on the conſciouſneſs they muſt feel in not having, in any way whatever, been acceſſaries to the late melancholy diſturbances.

Indeed, the known conduct of many of our clergy on the occaſion, is a ſufficient refutation of this injurious calumny. I myſelf was witneſs, in more than one inſtance, that ſeveral of them, at the riſk of inſult, and even perſonal danger, were not backward to ſhew their ſettled abhorrence of whatever has a tendency to affect the ſecurity of individuals, or to diſturb the envied tranquility of their country. Dr. Prieſtley is undoubtedly a very great ſufferer, and as ſuch he is juſtly entitled to commiſeration—he ſhould however recollect, that the way to obtain that ſympathy, and to ſecure the good opinion of his fellow citizens in general, is not by thus wantonly attacking the characters of the innocent.

Birmingham, July 25, 1791. AN INHABITANT.

To the Rev. Dr. Prieſtley.

Quid minus utile fuit quam ulcus hoc tangere?

REV. SIR,

TO deplore the loſs of your Apparatus, your Books, and Manuſcripts was natural, and every Friend of Science condoles with you; to remind the deluded people that they were injuring their own cauſe, was juſt and proper. The ſame admonition had been given them by the laity and clergy of their own communion: but the accuſation you bring againſt the gentlemen and the clergy, as the cauſes either direct or indirect of the outrages committed, is neither prudent nor true. It is not prudent, becauſe the preſent moment requires the moſt conciliatory language; it is not true, for our warfare is not with your perſons or your property, but with your opinions. As chriſtians,

chriſtians, you have endeavoured to deprive us of the comfortable doctrines of Atonement and Grace: as citizens, you have endeavoured to make us, like yourſelf, gloomy, querulous, and petulant, and though the inflammatory paper alluded to may not have been yours, the ſubſtance of it will be found in your writings. I am, Sir, your moſt obedient ſervant.

CLERICUS.

Dr. Prieſtley to the Printer of the Birmingham Gazette.

SIR,

I DO not now write to complain of my ſufferings in general, but of one in particular, which may in ſome meaſure be alleviated.

Private letters are a ſpecies of property peculiarly ſacred. No perſon of honour will even look into a letter not directed to himſelf; and yet many of mine, I underſtand, are circulated, read, and detained from me, without any regard to decency or juſtice. A ſtranger picked up two that had been written to me by a late Biſhop, and, inſtead of ſending them to *me*, he ſent them to the preſent biſhop of the ſame See, who alſo, inſtead of ſending them to me, ſent them to the ſon of the late biſhop, from whom I have juſt received them.

To have private letters (which are often improper to be ſeen by one's neareſt friends) expoſed to every impertinent eye, is one of the moſt painful circumſtances in my ſituation. I hope, therefore, that even enemies, who have any regard to their character will ſend any letter of mine that may fall into their hands, ſealed up, to thoſe who will convey them to me with the leaſt expence. There are diſhonourable, as well as honourable methods, of annoying an adverſary.

It may be neceſſary to inform ſome perſons, that no one can detain, or deſtroy the property of another (and letters are property) without being ſubject to an action. If any private papers be ſent to a Secretary of State, and he be bound by the rules of juſtice and honour, he will return them, or at leaſt, copies of them, to the perſon whoſe property they are.

I am, Sir, yours, J. PRIESTLEY.

From

From the Committee of Diſſenters.

Birmingham, Aug. 22, 1791.

WHEREAS it now appears, that amongſt other inſidious and unwarrantable practices made uſe of during the late riots, to delude the populace, and inſtigate them to acts of violence and deſtruction, letters were forged, charging the diſſenters with a treaſonable deſign to overthrow the preſent happy conſtitution of this kingdom, and pretending that the whole body of them were combined together, and had appointed to aſſemble on the 16th of Auguſt, "to burn the churches, blow up the parliament, cut off the head of the King, and aboliſh all taxes:" And whereas it is now well known, that ſuch forged letters were pretended to be found among the papers of the Rev. Dr. Prieſtley, and Wm. Ruſſell, Eſq. and the words above quoted formed part of one of the forged letters which were brought and read by two perſons on horſe-back at Showell-green, the houſe of Wm. Ruſſell Eſq. whilſt the ſame was in flames, in order to inſtigate the rioters to further acts of violence: Notice is hereby given, that the proteſtant diſſenters of Birmingham, in addition to the Reward of One Hundred Pounds, graciouſly offered by his Majeſty for diſcovering the inſtigators of the late horrid violences, will give a further reward of One Hundred Pounds for the diſcovery of the perſon or perſons who wrote the ſaid forged letters, or any one of them, ſo that he or they may be convicted thereof, and brought to puniſhment. THOMAS LEE, jun.

Secretary to the Committee of Proteſtant Diſſenters in Birmingham.

Temple Row, Birmingham, Saturday, July 16, 1791.

WHEREAS ſome deteſtable *villains*, from the moſt wicked motives, to injure Mr. WM. WINDSOR, a tenant of Mr. BROOKE's, at *Aſhſted*, have circulated a report that Mr. WINDSOR's buildings at *Aſhſted*, belong to the *Corporation of Coventry*. As ſuch report is evidently intended to incenſe the *friends* of CHURCH and KING, to *deſtroy* the property of the ſaid WM. WINDSOR; Mr. BROOKE, whoſe *moſt* hearty attachment is *well-known* to the *real friends* of CHURCH and KING, begs leave to addreſs them with the moſt ſolemn *aſſurance*, upon the *word* and *honour* of a CHURCH and KING's MAN, that the *Corporation of Coventry*, nor any *Preſbyterian*, have any

any concern or intereſt whatever, in the *buildings* and property of the ſaid Wm. WINDSOR, at *Aſhſted*, nor in any of the *buildings* belonging to Mr. BROOKE, or any other perſon at *Aſhſted*, and that upon all elections for the City of Coventry, where the ſaid Wm. WINDSOR lived before he came to *Aſhſted*, he uniformly voted *againſt* the *Corporation and Preſbyterian intereſt*, and always ſupported the REAL TRUE BLUE, which is the CHURCH and KING party.

Mr. BROOKE therefore is convinced, that this ADDRESS will be attended to by the GENTLEMEN in the CHURCH and KING party, and hereby offers a reward of Ten Guineas, for the detection of the *raſcals* who gave riſe to ſo falſe a report.

Church and King for ever *.

From the Birmingham Gazette of July 18, 1791.

Birmingham, July 16, 1791.

Friends and Fellow Countrymen,

IT is earneſtly requeſted, that every *true friend* to the *Church of England*, and to the laws of his country, will reflect how much a *continuance* of the preſent proceedings muſt injure *that Church* and *that King they are intended to ſupport*; and how highly unlawful it is to deſtroy the rights and property of *any* of our neighbours. And all *true friends* to the town and trade of Birmingham, *in particular*, are intreated to forbear *immediately* from all riotous and violent proceedings; diſperſing and returning peaceably to their trades and callings, as the only way to do *credit to themſelves* and *their cauſe*, and to promote the peace, happineſs, and proſperity of this great and flouriſhing town.

Birmingham, Sunday, July 17, 1791.

Important information to the FRIENDS *of* CHURCH *and* KING.

Friends and Fellow Churchmen,

BEING convinced you are unacquainted, that the great loſſes which are ſuſtained by *your burning* and *deſtroying* of the houſes of ſo many individuals, will eventually fall upon the *county at large*, and not upon the perſons to whom they belonged, we feel it our duty to inform you, that the damages already

* This Paper, and the two following, could not be inſerted in their proper place, without interrupting the Narrative.

done, upon the beſt computation that can be made, will amount to upwards of *One Hundred Thouſand Pounds*; the whole of which enormous ſum will be charged upon the reſpective pariſhes, and paid out of the rates. We, therefore, as your *friends*, conjure you immediately to deſiſt from the deſtruction of *any more houſes*; otherwiſe the very proceedings of your *zeal* for ſhewing your attachment to the CHURCH and KING, will inevitably be the means of moſt ſeriouſly injuring innumerable families, who are hearty ſupporters of Government, and bring on an addition of taxes, which *yourſelves, and the reſt of the Friends of the Church*, will for years feel a very grievous burthen.

This we aſſure you was the caſe in London, when there were ſo many houſes, and public buildings burnt and deſtroyed in the year 1780, and you may rely upon it, will be the caſe on the preſent occaſion. And we muſt obſerve to you, that *any further* violent proceedings will more offend your King and Country than ſerve the cauſe of Him and the Church.

Fellow Churchmen, as you love your King, regard his laws, and reſtore peace. GOD SAVE THE KING.

Aylesford	Edward Carver	Charles Curtis
E. Finch	John Brooke	Spencer Madan
Robert Lawley,	J. Carles	Edward Palmer
Rob. Lawley, jun.	B. Spencer	W. Villers
R. Moland	H. Greſ. Lewis	W. W. Maſon.
W. Digby		

Dr. Tatham's Letter to the Diſſenters.

To George Rous, Eſq. Preſident, and to the Patrons of the Anniverſary of the French Revolution,

Holden at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, on the 14th of July, 1791.

AS I found it inconſiſtent with my honour and repugnant to my feelings, as an Engliſhman, to give you my perſonal attendance at the Crown and Anchor, I tranſmitted my ſentiments on the occaſion to *John Barker Church, Eſq. M. P.* one of the ſtewards; requeſting that my letter might be publicly read in the Anniverſary. This requeſt, I underſtand, was not complied with; the reaſon of which I am at a loſs to conjecture, unleſs it be, that men are unwilling to be informed of their *miſtakes*; or that I addreſſed an aſſembly whoſe principles and ſentiments, both in politics and religion, are ſuperlatively ſublime, by the Gothic name of *Gentlemen*. With all proper attention

attention and reſpect for ſo conſiderable a claſs of people, I ſhall, on the preſent occaſion, change the appellation for one more appropriated to your character: and, as ye *diſſent* from your fellow-citizens in political and religious tenets, or are the dupes of thoſe who do, it will properly expreſs you all.

By your Anniverſary, ye Diſſenters, and others, which ye promoted among your brethren in different parts of England, whatever was the oſtenſible ſubject, or whatever was the occaſional pretence, it at length appears too plainly, that your real object was to give your democratical principles a rapid currency throughout the nation, to render Engliſhmen diſſatisfied with their preſent form of Government, and to prepare the public mind for that Revolution in the State, which ye have ſo long, ſo anxiouſly, and ſo ignorantly deſired; but how totally have ye miſtaken both *yourſelves* and *all true Engliſhmen?*

As to YOURSELVES, notwithſtanding all the pains and aſſiduity ye have employed theſe many years, by every private and public art which the rack of ingenuity could invent, to work your ſect into importance, and your tenets into practice, ye find them univerſally rejected and yourſelves contemned. Notwithſtanding all the noiſe and buſtle ye have made with your tongues and with your pens, by your hirelings and coadjutors, in pamphlets, in newſpapers, and in reviews, which for the promotion of your purpoſe, ye have almoſt entirely engroſſed, all your induſtry has failed, and your ſchemes have miſcarried: and ye experimentally find that the *loyalty* of Engliſhmen, which ye have moved every engine to ſubvert, is that native virtue without which they cannot exiſt, that ſacred deep-rooted principle which no power can ſhake.

Thus, however prominent your hopes, and ſanguine your expectations, ye have found them totally diſappointed, and yourſelves neglected by every deſcription and claſs of men. When the day of your anticipated triumph came, "big with the fate of Cato and of Rome," which ye had announced with a proud and growing confidence, and in which your wiſhes were to meet their conſummation in the converſion of the people,—the ſecond Anniverſary of the French Revolution, what an appearance did ye make! Your very leaders, who on a former occaſion, hoped to convert you into the tool of party, now conſidered you not worth their pains. Where were thoſe ſplendid characters by whom your Anniverſary was conducted a year ago? Where was *The puiſſant Lord* who took the chair on the 14th of July, 1790, and preſided with the intrepidity of a lion elected

King? Was he gone to claim a ſeat among the enlightened patriots of the neighbouring continent, whom he ſo much admired? May his political principles and conduct receive their merited reward in the Congreſs of America, or in the National Aſſembly of France, inſtead of the Britiſh Houſe of Peers! Where was *The Man of the People*, as he is falſely called, that conſummate general in politics, who with equal dexterity can employ his ſhafts on every ſide? Was he gone to ſeek another coalition with a Miniſter of State?—May every Britiſh Miniſter reflect with horror on the diſgrace and ruin of the laſt, and ſhun him as a precipice! Where was *The Friend and Patron of the Comic Muſe*, that champion of falſe liberty, bold in his flight, and ſoaring as an eagle? Was his boldneſs ſuppreſſed and his pinions ſhackled by the injunction of an illuſtrious Prince, who excels him as much in ſterling underſtanding as he does in native dignity? May that illuſtrious Prince employ that underſtanding on all other occaſions, and diſcard from his perſon and councils, as the worſt of ſycophants, all who are hoſtile to the crown and conſtitution of England! *One of your Apoſtles of Liberty* is gone before to reap the fruits of his political labours. May his miſtakes be pardoned, his errors cancelled, and his Manes reſt in peace! But where was that *other Apoſtle of ideal Liberty*, who ſtill ſurvives? was he more uſefully employed in patroniſing another Anniverſary at Birmingham, where, for eleven years, he has been propagating his more than apoſtolical doctrine againſt the Church and King of England, and againſt another King, greater and more divine than the King of England!—Alas! I ſhudder whilſt I relate. Kindled with a ſpark of that loyalty which nothing can extinguiſh in the breaſts of Engliſhmen, the populace revolted againſt their paſtor, and, in the paroxiſm of a tumultuous and ungoverned zeal, have committed outrages, which, whilſt he applauds the motive, every Engliſhman muſt lament. May he live to repent of the injuries he has done his country and mankind, in more reſpects than one; and inſtead of prevaricating and perverting ſcripture in a letter of exculpation, let him attribute to himſelf and the Anniverſary the *ſole cauſe* of the riot and devaſtation that enſued.

And ye have not only miſtaken yourſelves and been deſerted by your leaders; ye have miſtaken ALL TRUE ENGLISHMEN. With the learned and the wiſe, who muſt ever be the few, your political ſophiſtry has produced no effect or emotion but contempt. With the ſimple and the ignorant, who muſt always be the many, your hopes were placed. But, however ſimple and ignorant,

ignorant, they are ſenſible of their happineſs, and independent in their ſpirit; and they have given you a tremendous proof that they poſſeſs the hearts and prejudices of Engliſhmen, which no ſophiſtry can pervert or change. In this crown and ſummit of your expectation, in which your meditated Revolution was to find its origin, how univerſally are ye diſappointed! the common people of England (and when I ſpeak of England I ſpeak of Britain) whom ye have ſo much ſtudied, and courted with ſuch aſſiduity, ye did not underſtand. They are as loyal as they are brave; and brave as loyal. No ſooner did they ſee through the artful veil, which ye throw over every thing ye ſay or do, to the end ye have in view, the diſturbance of their national peace and happineſs in Church and State, and an attempt upon the Government under which theſe bleſſings are enjoyed, than that common-people, whom ye thought ye had moulded to your purpoſe, felt themſelves injured and inſulted; and their reſentment, when it took fire, has proved as ſevere as it was honeſt.

Thus, ye Diſſenters, *ye have miſtaken altogether*, and are at length convinced, if facts and experience can convince you, that *your miſtake has involved in its conſequences*, as I admoniſhed you before, *much public and private evil*, and was in danger of involving more.

Ye are diſſatisfied and deluded men, who, ſeeing licentiouſneſs and low ambition under the maſk of liberty, laying waſte a neighbouring kingdom, and erecting on its ruins the worſt of tyranny, are eager to emulate its phrenzy, by ſtimulating your country to imitate its example. Your Anniverſary and the *Toaſts* ye drank at London, as well as they at Birmingham, and have had the audacity to publiſh, proclaim to the world this infatuated truth. Your toaſts are replete with faction and diſaffection, which were artfully intended to be the more effective by being mixed with what wears the face, but only the face, of loyalty. Inſtead of being the *friends of liberty in England*, as in your invitation ye pretended, however ye may ſhuffle and prevaricate in words (for the whole of your conduct is made up of artifice and evaſion) your toaſts and actions have made it *plain that ye wiſh to effect*, as I informed you, *the public affairs and local concerns of this country*, in total deſtruction of that liberty, and to plunge England into the anarchy and miſery of France.

Your firſt toaſt, *The Rights of Men*, is a phantom conjured up among the French and among yourſelves, the diſciples of a

viſionary and chimerical philoſophy, as the baſis of all your political fabrications, without a correſpondent reality in the world; which, however, it may ſtimulate an infatuated race to pull down the civil power, can never aſſiſt them to build another.

In the ſecond, ye drank *The Nation, the Law, and the King*; and what ſort of King ye meant is obvious from the third, in which ye celebrated your favourite ſubject, *The Revolution of France*; and alſo from the ſeventh, in which ye drank, *The Sovereignty of the People.* It is clear from hence, that ye did not mean ſuch a King as *George the Third, the ſovereign Monarch of Great Britain*, but as *Louis the Sixteenth, the preſent King, or rather priſoner, of the French.* And as to the *nation* and the *law*, ye ſurely neither underſtood the conſtitution of the one, nor the ſpirit and letter of the other; for hiſtory and experience have informed us, that the *conſtitution* of Great Britain cannot ſubſiſt without a King, veſted with that plenitude of regal power poſſeſſed by George the Third; that *ſuch a King* cannot exiſt in that conſtitution without his *church*, his *nobles*, and his faithful *commons*; all which principalities and powers are eſtabliſhed, confirmed, and ſanctioned by the whole authority of the *law.* When, in the eighth toaſt, ye celebrated *perfect liberty*, with much apparent zeal, ye knew not what it is: for without ſuch a law there can exiſt no *Britiſh liberty*, the *moſt perfect* of all other; and without ſuch a King that law can have *no effect.* If, therefore, ye underſtood the nature of true liberty and public happineſs, which are ſynonimous, ye would be thankful, in the firſt place, that the *nation* has ſuch a *law* and ſuch a *king* as thoſe of England; and, in the ſecond, that that king is *George the Third*; for, however ye may affect to hold him cheap, as the French (whom in all things ye wiſh to imitate) do Louis XVI. he poſſeſſes as much ſound underſtanding as the wiſeſt of you all, more true piety than the moſt ſanctified of you all, and more honeſty than ye all together.

Your triumph, in the ninth toaſt, over Mr. Burke, who ſo ably rang the fire-bell of your ſedition, is the emptieſt gaſconade, by which ye have ſhewn yourſelves *Frenchmen* in manners as well as ſentiment. Neither Mr. Burke, nor the other friends of the Britiſh Government, will ſhrink from the political diſcuſſion in which ye ſo vainly glory, when ſound reaſoning and ſound principles are employed: but they cannot be expected to ſtoop to the notice of the ignorant and audacious ribaldry of Mr. *Paine.* Your *two Apoſtles of Liberty* are your ableſt champions,

pions, and they have been refuted without an anſwer: for, however ye may toaſt *the free principles of the Britiſh Conſtitution*, and they may have written on the *Principles of Government* in general, they are as totally ignorant of the one, as ye have ſhewn yourſelves unacquainted with the other.

Was it loyal or reſpectful to that King and Government, under whoſe auſpices ye enjoy more liberty than ye deſerve, to inſult them openly by the names of *Waſhington* and *Franklin*, the arch-rebel and arch-traitor of Old England, and to celebrate in a toaſt of joy, the *diſjunction of America* from the Britiſh Crown? Ye might have been content in having privately encouraged and fomented the firſt unnatural rebellion, in privately rejoicing together at the defeat of a Cornwallis, and in weeping together over that of a Montgomery, and in privately triumphing in your own diſgrace, without offering on the high altar of ſedition, formerly erected for the purpoſe in your anniverſary, a public inſult to your king and country.

Did not this, in addition to your diſaffected conduct, and as the crown of your diſloyalty, ſtrongly ſavour of "Faction tending to the diſturbance of the public peace *;" and of "Rebellious riot and tumult, to the diſturbance of the public peace, and to the endangering of his Majeſty's perſon and government, fomented by perſons diſaffected to his Majeſty, by which his Majeſty and his adminiſtration hath been moſt maliciouſly and falſely traduced, with intent to raiſe diviſions, and to alienate the affections of his people from his Majeſty †?"

Thus, ye Diſſenters, by your anniverſaries at London and elſewhere, ye have ſhewn yourſelves diſaffected to our preſent happy government in church and ſtate, and anxious to change it for one infinitely worſe; and ye have hereby proved yourſelves, as I foretold, *an example of the operation of the French Revolution, in diſturbing the peace and tranquility of England:* for a conduct ſo factious and ſeditious could not eſcape the reſentment of your fellow-citizens, who are loyal ſubjects, however patient they may be. Though prevented in London by the vigilance of a wiſe and able government, ye ſee the effects of your anniverſaries, which ye might have foreſeen, in the ravage and devaſtation of a diſtant county, for which, as the *ſole and adequate cauſe*, ye and your aſſociates at Birmingham are *accountable*. In that town and neighbourhood they have had a foretaſte of that liberty reſulting from an Engliſh democracy,

* See Bacon's Abridgment of the Law of England, vol. 3. page 37.

† 1 George I. Stat. 2. chap. 5. § 1.

the ſovereignty of the people, in which ye glory: and, if your ſyſtem of politics was adopted in Great Britain, the ſame ravage and devaſtation would ſoon be co-extenſive with the iſland.

And now, ye Diſſenters, convinced of your ignorance and *miſtakes*, by that experience, which alone can make ſome men wiſe, ye will not, I hope, renew your anniverſaries another year, of the *illegality* of which I had forewarned you; and which is now evinced both in your own ſeditious conduct, and in the riot and tumult they have occaſioned. Inſtead of this vain teſtimony of ſuch tumultuous and expenſive joy for a thing ye do not underſtand, and with which ye have not the leaſt concern, let me exhort you, another year, to remain peaceably and induſtriouſly at home: for, if ye ſhould attempt another ſuch anniverſary, inſtead of a ſecond monitory letter, I will call upon the public magiſtrate, and take care the call ſhall be obeyed, to put in uſe the 1ſt of Geo. I. Stat. 2. chap. 5.

In the mean time, ye Diſſenters, think *ſoberly* and *modeſtly* of YOURSELVES, as ye ought to think; and *honourably* and *reſpectfully* of your fellow-citizens, who are TRUE ENGLISHMEN. Suppoſe not that ye are *better* or *wiſer* than they; for this falſe eſtimate is the great root of your miſtakes. Be thankful to Providence for the king that reigns over you, who is to you both a *father* and a *friend*, and for the religious liberty with which ye are ſo *graciouſly indulged*, and permit me, in return for the printed ſtring of *toaſts* lately ſent me by the poſt, to give you one of my own much better than them all—in defiance of your arts and machinations againſt them,

MAY CHURCH AND KING REMAIN FOR EVER!

I am, ye Diſſenters, with deep concern for the effects of your deluſion, your friend and fellow citizen,

Bodleian, Oxford,
3d of Auguſt, 1791. EDWARD TATHAM.

The Addreſs of GEORGE ROUS, *Eſq. Chairman at the late Anniverſary of the French Revolution, at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, London, to the Public.*

MUCH induſtry has been employed to repreſent, as the enemies of public order, all thoſe who, on the 14th of July, profeſſed openly to rejoice at the emancipation of twenty-five millions of fellow-creatures from the yoke of deſpotiſm: who hailed, with exultation, the generous and beneficent (even as if it

it were viſionary) attempt to realize thoſe rights, which all theoriſts have acknowledged to be the reſult of moral reaſoning, the legitimate ſource of human laws; and the protection of which conſtitutes the ſole object of all juſt Government. The calumnies directed againſt myſelf will not provoke reply; but I cannot reſiſt my inclination to point the public attention to the *oppoſite* effects which have naturally followed from the *oppoſite* principles of the two parties.

Thoſe men *muſt* be the friends of peace, whoſe fixed principles require them to claim no rights for themſelves, which they are not equally ready to maintain for others—to wiſh that the voice of truth only may be heard—and to effect no change which ſhall not be previouſly ſanctioned by the conſenting reaſon of mankind. Accordingly, in the numerous places where the French Revolution has been celebrated by convivial meetings, no ſymptom of ill-will to any human being has appeared among its friends. In Birmingham alone the cry of Church and King has reſounded, and a diſciplined banditti, profeſſing *to obey orders*, have deſtroyed the houſes of Revolutioniſts and Anti-revolutioniſts, of the friends and enemies of the preſent Miniſters with the moſt impartial outrage. The ſole pretext has been, that men perſumed to worſhip God in the manner they deemed moſt acceptable to the divine nature. The miſerable deluded wretches, the immediate inſtruments of violence, who muſt now be ſacrificed to the laws of their country, can excite compaſſion alone. Thinking men will endeavour to eradicate the ſource of this evil. When governors puniſh imputed error as convicted guilt, and mark men as a diſtinct race for a difference of opinion, on a ſubject where the moſt unlimited exerciſe of private judgment is duty,—when a Right Rev. Prelate, in the plenitude of his charity, denounces, as unworthy ſons of the Church, thoſe meek Chriſtians who ſhall preſume even to vote for a Member of Parliament, *profane* enough to believe that *ſuppoſed error* ought not to be treated as a *crime*, or puniſhed by proſcription from the common rights of citizenſhip,—when Teſts, as an elegant author expreſſes it, "profane the rights of the religion they pretend to guard, and uſurp the dominion of the God they pretend to revere," —is it wonderful that the untaught multitude ſhould believe the intereſts of Church and King may be advanced by conflagrations lighted in the houſes of their fellow-citizens?

I can differ from Dr. Prieſtley without feeling the ſmalleſt diminution of that eſteem which his talents and virtues have impreſſed.

impreſſed. After reading his arguments, I retain a firm conviction that a precarious proviſion for the Clergy has a tendency to degrade religion in the perſons of its Miniſters; thongh truth compels me to acknowledge, that the teachers of diſſenting congregations in this kingdom form a ſplendid exception to the general rule. But the zeal of diſſent, with other cauſes, may operate an effect ſcarcely to be expected in the abſence of theſe motives; and it is ſafe, at leaſt, to place the Clergy of the national religion in a ſtate, whenever they deſerve, to command reſpect. Yet a hint may not be uſeleſs to the zealots of our Church, that a ſubverſion in Civil Government of the firſt principles of juſtice, by an ignominious excluſion of great bodies of our fellow-citizens from political truſts, is not the beſt poſſible mode of protecting eſtabliſhments from the inquiſitive ſpirit of an enlightened age. GEO. ROUS.

Lincoln's-inn Fields, July 24, 1791.

From the Morning Chronicle of July 28, 1791.

To the Editor.

SIR,

IN ſome miniſterial Papers, the Diſſenters have been repreſented as in a ſtate of deſpondency and dejection, in conſequence of the ſufferings of their brethren at Birmingham. As far as my acquaintance with Diſſenters extends, I know not a ſingle inſtance to verify this obſervation, that has been made with ſo much triumph and complacency. That this has not been the caſe with any individual among them, I will not preſume to affirm, for in all great bodies there are timid men to be met with; but that they have no cauſe for deſpondency or dejection of any kind, it is very eaſy to ſhew.

The ſimple fact is this, that ſome Diſſenters of great eminence, and of acknowledged worth of character, have had their houſes deſtroyed, their property plundered, and their lives put into imminent danger, by a furious mob, who have been called the friends of the King, and of the Church of England.

Let us now examine into the crimes which led thoſe friends of the King, and of the Church of England, to adopt ſuch violent meaſures. The charge alledged, is diſaffection to our Conſtitution in Church and State.

Whether this charge be or be not well founded, it happens to have been advanced at a time and place extremely ill choſen, with

with reſpect to thoſe who have brought it forward; at a time when Diſſenters, together with Members of the Church of England, had been drinking the King and Conſtitution as a toaſt; at a meeting held in a room that had been ornamented with an emblem, expreſſive of very warm loyalty, and at which a gentleman of reſpectability preſided, well known in the world of ſcience and of letters, and moreover a Member of the Church of England. It is plain then, that there was nothing in the celebration of the anniverſary of the taking of the Baſtille, and of the origin of French Liberty, to furniſh even a pretext for the outrages that have been committed.

We muſt ſuppoſe then that the charge was founded on other grounds, to which the Loyaliſts and Churchmen of Birmingham, who ſtood forth the active champions of their principles on the late occaſion, muſt have been entire ſtrangers, had not they been ſtated to them, by others better acquainted with theſe matters than themſelves.

We will ſuppoſe then, that the offence aroſe from the writtings of certain Diſſenters; writings in which they ſhew themſelves to be diſaffected to our Conſtitution in Church and State. Admitting this to be notoriouſly the caſe, I would beg leave to aſk ſome furious perſons, whether, after cool reflection, they think that a mob ought to be let looſe upon them, to abuſe their perſons, to burn their houſes, and to plunder their property. Can the ſpirit of Engliſhmen be reconciled—can the laws of the country be made to comport with ſo ſavage a mode of puniſhment? The ſenſe of every unbiaſſed perſon revolts at the idea—there lives not an honeſt man that ſhudders not at the thought—there is not a nation that ranks among thoſe called civilized, even where bigotry reigns moſt triumphant, that would incur the diſgrace of ſanctioning ſuch a procedure, as that carried on by thoſe very indecently called the friends of the Church at Birmingham. It were better to be dragooned, as the Proteſtants were in France, in the reign of Louis XIV. at the time of the revocation of the edict at Nantes, than to be committed into the hands of a drunken populace. If it ſhould be thought right to have this meaſure followed by others of a ſimilar nature, I hope ſuch friends of the King and of the Church, will give timely notice of their intentions, that Diſſenters, if they are conſtrained to leave their property behind, may at leaſt carry away their perſons unhurt, to ſome more benignant climes, where the iron hand of intolerance is not felt. This ſurely will not be deemed too great a boon to give them.

Worthy

Worthy Churchmen may be offended at any one's making ſuch a ſuppoſition, I do not mean it for them, but ſolely for thoſe who have entered ſo deeply into the ſpirit of party, as to have loſt all ſenſe of candour, and even of common juſtice.

But let us ſee how the Diſſenters ſtand with regard to the charge that has above been ſtated. Many Diſſenters are of opinion, that our civil conſtitution is extremely corrupt, and that it needs to be reformed. Is this opinion peculiar to Diſſenters? Are there not within the pale of the Church, names the moſt revered, who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their zeal for this very opinion? Has any man, Churchman or Diſſenter, expreſſed himſelf more ſtrongly upon this ſubject, than the preſent Miniſter of this Country? Did he not promiſe to ſupport meaſures for a Parliamentary Reform, both as a man and a Miniſter? If the Diſſenters are wrong in this matter, and if Churchmen, among whom may be named the late Sir George Savile, Mr. Fox, Major Cartwright, Mr. Wyvil, and a hoſt beſides, of all that is great and reſpectable, with the Prime Miniſter at their head, have been, and ſtill are wrong in this matter, why are the Diſſenters alone to bear the blame? If the meaſure be right, and ſhould hereafter happen to be adopted, poſterity will, I am ſure, not allow them all the merit of it; if it be not a right meaſure, why ſhould any fear, that the diſcerning ſpirit of the impartial public will not diſcover its ill tendency. If court favours, and all that is moſt flattering to ambition and vanity, be ſufficient to induce men of talents to point out its fallacy, there will not be wanting thoſe who will engage in the work. If there be any thing in endeavours to awaken the ſenſe of Engliſhmen, to demand a more equal repreſentation of the people in Parliament, that militates againſt the peace and order of ſociety, why is not the full force of the law applied to prevent it?—Why has not a ſtatute enforced by proper penalties, been paſſed for that purpoſe, for the evil, if it be one, has been of long duration?

On the diſcuſſions to which the Revolution in France have given occaſion, I ſhould have bluſhed for the Diſſenters, if none of them had ſtood forth to defend the common cauſe. Beſides Doctors Prieſtley and Towers, Mr. Lofft, Mr. Chriſtie, the Country Attorney, and the Country Juſtice of Peace, I know of none among the Diſſenters who entered the liſts. They cannot claim the honour of reckoning among their body the other numerous anſwerers of Mr. Burke. Earl Stanhope, Geo. Rous, Eſq. Sir Brook Boothby, Mrs. Macaulay Graham, Mrs. Woll-

Wollſtonecraft, Mr. Mackintoſh, and Thomas Paine, it is well known are not Diſſenters. I would aſk, in the language of our adverſaries, were the Diſſenting writers the moſt intemperate of thoſe that appeared in this controverſy? But there are among the Diſſenters warm admirers of Mr. Paine; are there not more in the Church who prize his work as highly? Why then, in the name of all that is fair and equitable, is the whole blame to be thrown upon one ſet of people, who, if they are in an error, ſhare it in common with ſome of their moſt reſpectable neighbours? Let then the friends of the Church of England bring all the members of that Church into a right mind upon the ſubject, before they burn the places of worſhip, and plunder the property of the Diſſenters. If there is a want of candour in the ſtrictures made by theſe writers upon the Conſtitution, the Diſſenters can urge pleas which Churchmen cannot; the civil diſabilities under which this Conſtitution places them, forms a ſtigma, which, as men of honour, they cannot help deeply feeling.

It is farther ſaid, that the Diſſenters are diſaffected to the Church. If by that is meant, that they do not believe all its doctrines, nor approve of all its rites and ceremonies, and form of government, there is clearly no warding off the charge. If it be a crime to be diſaffected to the Church, it is a crime to be a Diſſenter, and the law of England not only tolerates crimes, but protects Engliſh ſubjects in the exerciſe of what is criminal. But that the Engliſh government does not regard any religious opinions as criminal, is apparent from its having eſtabliſhed Popery in Quebec, Preſbyterianiſm in Scotland, and Epiſcopacy in England. Many Diſſenters are of opinion, that there is no neceſſary connexion between Church and State; that ſuch an alliance (as it has been called) is injurious to both. The Church, they apprehend, they can prove to be very capable of being employed, in the hands of the executive power, to the detriment of the rights and liberties of the people. They alſo apprehend, that the beſt ends which religion, even in a political view, can anſwer, are defeated, in a great degree, by a connexion with the State. To this cauſe they attribute that ſecularizing ſpirit, which is ſo notorious among the high orders of Eccleſiaſtics, and which is ſo hoſtile to that ſpirit of piety and humility by which they ought to be diſtinguiſhed. Theſe are ſentiments, no doubt, highly diſagreeable to numbers of perſons, but they are the

honeſt

honeſt convictions of many Diſſenters: convictions to which they were led by inquiries, ſuggeſted to them by the ſituations in which they find themſelves as Diſſenters. They do not regard them as unintereſting ſpeculations, but as ſubjects of importance, highly worthy of being diſcuſſed. They have not attempted to propagate them in an underhand way, but they have openly publiſhed them to the world, and left them to ſtand or fall, to ſpread, or to ſink into oblivion, according as they ſhould appear to be true or falſe. The opponents of thoſe principles have not always ſhewn that confidence in the inherent excellence of their cauſe, which thoſe who are unfriendly to them could wiſh they had done. The only guilt then that falls upon Diſſenters, is that of diſcuſſing theſe points. If diſcuſſion ought not to be tolerated, why are not laws enacted, enjoining the prohibition of it? Why do we profeſs that theſe are times, thoſe happy times, to which the words of the Roman Hiſtorian are applicable: "*Ubi ſentire quæ velis et quæ ſentias dicere licet.*" Freedom of diſcuſſion being univerſally ſuppoſed to be the privilege of Britons, a weapon with which every one who knew how to wield it might ſecurely attack, whatever appeared to him to be corrupt or radically wrong in Church or State.

This having been the conduct of Diſſenters, they cannot ſee that they have incurred any blame; they ſympathize, but do not deſpond. Thoſe of them who have ſuffered in the preſent inſtance, do not ſupplicate, but claim, with as much confidence as any other order of citizens, the protection of the laws, and demand a reparation of their injuries.

Thoſe who have moſt reaſon for lamentation in the preſent inſtance, are the friends of the Church of England, on account of the miſguided and ferocious zeal of their brethren, who have diſgraced their cauſe, by uſing antichriſtian weapons, and by committing outrages which, whenever they are mentioned, will make every ingenuous Churchman bluſh.

The Diſſenters have the feelings of thoſe whoſe friends have been robbed and plundered; the friends of the Church of England, if they acknowledge the rioters at Birmingham as Fellow-churchmen, muſt feel as thoſe do whoſe brethren have been guilty of thoſe flagrant acts of injuſtice, which the laws of their country decree deſerving of being puniſhed capitally. I do not mean to ſay, that the upright Churchman, who is tolerant in his principles and practice, is to be charged with a ſingle

ſingle particle of the guilt of his perſecuting Fellow-churchmen, who will anſwer for their conduct at the tribunal of their country. Thoſe only participate in the guilt of theſe practices who abet them. Which then have cauſe to appear dejected? the plundered and their friends, or the plunderers and thoſe who are united to them by the ties of religious profeſſion? I leave the queſtion to be anſwered by every unbiaſſed perſon.

I will ſtate the caſe wherein the Diſſenters would have appeared to deſpond; the preſent is not that caſe. Had any of their communion inſtigated mobs to demoliſh churches; had they ſet them upon attempts to inſult and plunder the moſt revered for amiableneſs of manners, and brilliancy of talents, and the moſt diſtinguiſhed, by juſt celebrity, of the champions of the Church; had they burned the houſes, pillaged the property, and ranſacked the private concerns of the moſt reſpectable of its commercial members, then indeed would the Diſſenters have held down their heads aſhamed and abaſhed, and they would have had cauſe for ſo doing. Had any of their perſuaſion outraged the meaneſt Eccleſiaſtic, I am well aware, that the Diſſenters would, to a man, have felt honeſt ſhame for the unworthy behaviour of ſuch perſons.

Should any preſume, that in conſequence of what has happenned, we ſhall be leſs open and ſpirited in the avowal of our religious and political principles than we have hitherto been they are moſt aſſuredly miſtaken. Rational ſentiments in religion, and political doctrines founded on the rights of men, will prevail, whatever becomes of Diſſenters. Were the Diſſenters all baniſhed the kingdom, there is no doubt but that there would ſtart up, out of the boſom of the Church of England, men in abundance to ſupport thoſe religious and political principles, the odium of which it ſeems to be now the policy to throw upon Diſſenters. Yet it will not be imagined that ſuch ungenerous methods, as thoſe are, which have been practiſed at Birmingham, will prove any permanent injury to the principles which Diſſenters hold, or ever prevent Diſſenters from aſſerting or defending them. If the principles are well founded, a repetition of the fires of Smithfield will be inſufficient to cruſh them; if they are falſe, the diſcuſſion which their advocates provoke will prove fatal to them.

I am, Sir, Your's, &c.

A DISSENTER.

EXTRACT

EXTRACT FROM THE

Preface to the Rev. Mr. Scholefield's Sermon *,

Preached to the two Congregations of the Old and New Meetings, on their firſt aſſembling after the deſtruction of thoſe places, from Matt. v. 44. "But I ſay unto you, love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, "do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpitefully "uſe you, and perſecute you."

"SHOULD this Diſcourſe fall into the hands of any of the enemies to the Diſſenters (for enemies undoubtedly they have) it may lead them, through the divine bleſſing, to the moſt ſerious reflexions upon the atrociouſneſs of their late conduct.

"If ſuch are the directions of *Chriſt*, in reſpect to enemies, how much more ought they to feel their own departure from the benevolent ſpirit of chriſtianity, in the violence and animoſity exerciſed againſt thoſe from whom they have never received any real injury. Severe, indeed, muſt be their reflexions, if ever they are brought to take a ſerious and impartial review of the evils and calamities they have occaſioned.—How black is the liſt which recollection places before them!

"They have burnt down, with unprovoked rage and fury, two of the largeſt and moſt reſpectable places of worſhip, amongſt the Diſſenters, in this kingdom;—they have levelled with the ground, or ravaged, the houſes of as valuable, peaceful citizens, as this country can boaſt;—they have deſtroyed the habitation, and baniſhed (for the preſent) from his friends and family, a Man, who, for temper, abilities, and real worth, is an *ornament* to human nature; who has been admired and diſtinguiſhed by every friend to literature, and whom foreign nations would eſteem it an *honour* to have enrolled among them.—In fine, they have ſtained the future annals of our country with inſtances of rapine, injuſtice, and violence, to which its previous hiſtory, for centuries paſt, can ſcarce afford a parallel.

"The Author, at the time, was at a diſtance from home, and only learnt, in general, that it was the act of an undiſtinguiſhed mob:—but great was his ſurprize, and equal his indignation, to find on his return, not like St. Paul when walking through the ſtreets of Athens, an inſcription *to an unknown God*; but an appeal to *two* ſources of Authority, which ought to have been treated with higher reſpect, either as a willing or forced vindi-

* Printed by Belcher, Birmingham, price 1s.

cation

cation of their conduct—CHURCH and KING appeared wrote upon every houſe; and the *actors* in the ſcene claimed the honour of being their moſt *ſteady* and *zealous defenders*.

" His Majeſty has, with a zeal and ſpeed ſuited to a *parental care*, ſhown his marked diſapprobation of *ſuch defenders*, by ſending immediate relief, and publiſhing his royal proclamation. Numbers, likewiſe, of the eſtabliſhed Church, have, as individuals, acted a moſt *friendly* and *benevolent* part; but general reflexions or charges, upon large and public bodies of men, require as public and extenſive a refutal.

" Truly concerned for the honour of a Church, with whoſe officiating Clergy he held the moſt intimate and friendly intercourſe, for the firſt ſeventeen years of his own public miniſtry; a Church, from particular members of which he has received many proofs and inſtances of marked and diſtinguiſhed reſpect and kindneſs; the Author has waited, with a friendly impatience, to ſee a public Meeting of its Clergy and Laity called, and as public a diſavowal and abhorrence of the late riotous meaſures (oſtenſibly exerted in their ſupport) expreſſed. Hitherto he has waited in vain;—but was he allowed to argue the caſe with them, and was even a member of their own body, he ſhould ſay that till this is done, in the moſt open and unreſerved manner, a laſting ſtain will remain upon the body at large. Every thinking mind will ſoon diſcover, that if the Church ſtands in need of ſuch defenders—it is *weak*; if the Church approves, or even does not, in the moſt explicit terms, condemn them—it is *wicked*.

" Had any of the Churches of the Eſtabliſhment been burnt by accident, or through age required being pulled down and rebuilt, the Diſſenters (if neceſſary) would, even before this time, have furniſhed them with every accommodation in their power*. And ſhall not one expreſſion of condolance and ſympathy come from a body, under whoſe apparent auſpices, at leaſt, the whole of this *horrid buſineſs* has been tranſacted!

" He would farther venture to forewarn them, without any gift of prophecy, that except a meaſure of this kind is adopted, many of the wiſer, more-moderate, and thinking part of the Church, will be inclined for ever to leave its communion. Per-

* " At Banbury (while the Church is rebuilding) the Diſſenters have offered the uſe of their Meeting to the Members of the Eſtabliſhment; it has been accepted, and the Author is informed they attend public ſervice in it at this day."

 ſecution,

ſecution, in the darkeſt ages of the Church, wore always an unfriendly aſpect to its intereſt; but the very idea of it (with the light which has now diffuſed itſelf through Europe) will ſtrike many individuals with horror."

Copy of a Letter from M. Condorcet, *Secretary to the Academy of Sciences at Paris, to* Dr. Prieſtley.

Paris, July 30, 1791.

Sir, and moſt illuſtrious Aſſociate,

THE Academy of Sciences have charged me to expreſs the grief with which they are penetrated at the recital of the perſecution of which you have been lately the victim.

They all feel how much loſs the Sciences have experienced by the deſtruction of thoſe labours which you had prepared for their aggrandiſement. It is not you, Sir, who have reaſon to complain; your virtue and your genius ſtill remain undiminiſhed, and it is not in the power of human ingratitude to forget what you have done for the happineſs of mankind:—they only ought to be unhappy, whoſe guilty conduct has led their reaſon aſtray, and whoſe remorſe has already puniſhed their crimes.

You are not the firſt friend of Liberty, againſt whom Tyrants have armed the very people whom they have deprived of their rights. Theſe are the only means which they can make uſe of againſt him, whoſe diſintereſtedneſs of mind, whoſe elevation of ſoul, and whoſe purity of conduct, equally ſhelter him from their ſeductions and their vengeance.

They calumniate ſuch a perſon when they can neither intimidate nor corrupt him; they arm prejudices againſt him, when they dare not arm the laws; and that which they have done in regard to you, is the nobleſt homage that Tyranny dares to render to probity, to talents, and to courage.

At this preſent moment a league is formed throughout Europe againſt the general liberty of mankind; but for ſome time paſt another has exiſted, occupied with propagating and with defending this liberty, without any other arms than thoſe furniſhed by reaſon; and theſe will finally triumph.

It is in the neceſſary order of things, that error ſhould be momentary, and truth eternal. Men of genius, ſupported by their virtuous diſciples, when placed in the balance againſt the vulgar mob of corrupt intriguers—the inſtruments or the accomplices of Tyrants—muſt at length prevail againſt them.

The

The glorious day of Univerſal Liberty will ſhine upon our deſcendants, but we ſhall at leaſt enjoy the *aurora*; and you, Sir, have contributed not a little to accelerate that happy event by your labours, by the example of your virtues, by the indignation which all Europe feels againſt your perſecutors, and by the intereſt and the admiration which a misfortune has excited, that, although it may wound, cannot ſubdue your ſoul.

I am, with an inviolable and reſpectful attachment,
Sir, and my very illuſtrious aſſociate,
Your humble and moſt obedient ſervant,
CONDORCET.

Dr. Prieſtley's Anſwer.

SIR,

I AM more than conſoled for my loſſes, by learning that the Members of the Academy of Sciences have honoured me, by intereſting themſelves in what has befallen me; and particularly as I thereby diſcover, that the Friends of Philoſophy are what they ever ſhould be—the Friends of Univerſal Liberty. For myſelf, I have proved that the enemies of the one, are alſo the enemies of the other.

Having ever been the declared advocate for public Liberty, as well civil as religious, I naturally defended by my writings your laſt and glorious revolution. The great body of the clergy of this country, and many of thoſe who call themſelves the King's Friends, have long been my enemies; and in their deſtruction of all I poſſeſſed, they have not ſpared the inſtruments of that ſcience, the purſuit of which has given weight to my labours of another kind.

But do not think, Sir, that theſe friends of the clergy and of the King compoſe the Engliſh nation—they belong only to a deſpairing faction, routed in the conteſt of reaſoning. The ſober and ſenſible part of the nation diſapproves equally of the tenets of theſe factious men, and the means they employ to give them force. The Engliſh nation reſpects in general the French; and though at the preſent period too many are under error on her account, yet that nation will rival yours in every thing truly grand; in all things contributive to internal honour and felicity, and in that which may be productive of peace and benevolence reciprocally with her neighbours;—but more par-

ticularly with you, who will be ever dear to us, from the generous efforts you have made in favour of univerſal liberty—univerſal peace.

I beg you will aſſure thoſe who number me among themſelves, and generouſly ſympathize with my misfortunes, that ſo long as nature ſhall accord to me ability and life, I will purſue my philoſophic labours—demonſtrating to our common enemies, that the true love of liberty and of ſcience is extinguiſhed but with life; and that unreaſonable and wicked perſecution, tends rather to animate than repreſs the courage of the truly enamoured. Fully convinced that what is true and juſt will prevail ſooner or later, and that every ſort of oppoſition, ſerves only the more completely to eſtabliſh it,

I am, with much reſpect, &c. J. PRIESTLEY.

Addreſs of the Society of Friends of the Conſtitution, ſitting at the Jacobins, *to* Dr. Prieſtley.

SIR,

MANY learned Societies have already offered you, and will yet offer you, the tribute of their ſenſibility on the loſs which Science has ſuffered by the attack made on your property in its moſt precious particular, your Cabinet and Manuſcripts. In times leſs troubleſome, this loſs, afflicting to all claſſes of men, would even have affected many of thoſe who have now had the cruelty to rejoice in it, and who have entertained againſt your political principles a hatred which perhaps they do not feel towards you perſonally. You are the victim of the intereſt which you have taken in the cauſe of human nature, triumphant in the greateſt Revolution which ever occurred among men. You have interrupted the courſe of your labours and diſcoveries in phyſics, to juſtify the French nation againſt the abſurd charges brought againſt them, and multiplied by their oppreſſors, who are driven from a land of liberty. The cries of their deſpair, their exaggerated reproaches, their calumnious imputations, had, for a moment, ſpread deluſion over neighbouring nations. They deſired to interpoſe between them and France a cloud which in paſſing, ſhould obſcure, if not totally conceal from their view the glory of the French Revolution. You, Sir, penetrated this cloud, and drew from it ſome ſparks of light, which ſince have not ceaſed to illuminate the nations. One of your writings has victorioufly repulſed the attack of one of our moſt unjuſt detractors. From this, your name, already dear in Europe

rope to all thoſe who cultivate the arts, or who improve their reaſon, becomes peculiarly dear to Frenchmen. The Society of the Friends of the Conſtitution were able to reckon one friend more; and recently, on the news of the misfortune which has happened to the Sciences and to the world, more than to yourſelf, they united with zeal and affection an emotion of indignation againſt thoſe who excited the criminal attack, already puniſhed by the noble and touching Letter which you addreſſed to your Fellow-citizens, and which, without doubt, is expiated in part by the remorſe of the moſt of them. The ignorance of the people is the patrimony of tyrants—but it ceaſes—repentance ſucceeds, and preſently it chaſtiſes, on the heads of thoſe who inſtigate to crimes, the crime of drawing forth popular deluſion. The victim foreſees the inſtant of vengeance, without permitting himſelf to haſten it. He conſoles himſelf in ſeeing the diffuſion through his country and through Europe of the generous principles of ſociability, the power of which, every day augmented, is manifeſted in the innumerable teſtimonies of an univerſal intereſt in his calamity. We believe, Sir, that we enter into the ſecret of your character, in perſuading ourſelves that it is under this point of view alone, that theſe teſtimonies of an affecting eſteem cannot be indifferent to you. They are proofs of the progreſs of theſe ſocial ideas—of the public ſpirit which calls a free people to the practice of the virtues requiſite to the maintenance of liberty, which, ſtrengthening at home, concurs in ſpreading it around, and even perhaps in perfecting it among thoſe nations who enjoyed but an incomplete freedom. In fine, theſe teſtimonies announce the developement of that philanthropic patriotiſm which regards all men as *in ſolido* aſſociated in the common intereſt of general felicity; an idea ſo ſuperior to the conceptions of deſpots and ſlaves, as to be the object of their contemptible deriſion, but which poſterity will bleſs, as the happy fruit of that philoſophy, too modern, which reckons the illuſtrious PRIESTLEY among its moſt ardent propagators. We are, &c.

Letter from the Committee *of the* Revolution Society *to* Dr. Prieſtley.

Reverend Sir, *Auguſt* 16, 1791.

WE embrace the opportunity of the firſt Meeting of the Committee of the Revolution Society, ſubſequent to the atrocious riots which have taken place at Birmingham, to expreſs

preſs our concern and regret at thoſe acts of lawleſs violence, by which you have been ſo great a ſufferer, and which have reflected ſuch extreme diſhonour on this age, and on this nation.

It might have been preſumed, that the moſt ignorant and lawleſs ſavages would not have been induced to commit ſuch depredations on the houſe and property of a man of ſuch diſtinguiſhed merit as yourſelf, to whom the whole ſcientific world has been ſo eminently indebted, and in whoſe works thoſe principles of equal Liberty have been aſſerted and maintained, which would protect even the loweſt of the human ſpecies from violence and oppreſſion.—As a political writer, you have been employed in diſſeminating the moſt juſt and rational ſentiments of Government, and ſuch as are in a very high degree calculated to promote general freedom and happineſs.

The conduct of the Birmingham Rioters implied in it a complication of ignorance and brutality; which it is aſtoniſhing to find at the preſent period in ſuch a country as Great Britain. Nothing but the moſt execrable bigotry, united to ignorance the moſt contemptible, could lead any body of men to ſuppoſe, that ſuch acts of violence as were lately exerciſed at Birmingham againſt yourſelf, and other reſpectable Diſſenters in that town and its neighbourhood, could be juſtified by any difference of opinion. We hoped, that the age had been more enlightened, that it had been more univerſally admitted, that *no* country can be poſſeſſed of freedom, in which every man is not allowed to worſhip God according to the dictates of his own conſcience, and in which he is not permitted to defend his opinions. We hoped alſo, that the principles of Civil Liberty had been ſo well underſtood, and ſo extenſively adopted, that few would have been found in this country, who would not ſincerely have rejoiced at the emancipation of a neighbouring kingdom from tyranny, and in ſuch events as are calculated to promote general liberty and happineſs.

It is with exultation and triumph that we ſee the ſucceſs of the late juſt, neceſſary, and glorious Revolution in France; an event ſo pregnant with the moſt important benefits to the world, that not to rejoice in it would be unworthy of us as Freemen, and as friends to the general rights of human nature; and to aſcribe to the commemoration of the French Revolution the late devaſtations committed at Birmingham, would be to inſult the underſtandings of mankind.

We

We are ſorry to find that ſo many of our countrymen ſtill need to be inſtructed in the firſt principles of civil and religious freedom. But we ſtill hope that the period is not far diſtant, when the common rights of mankind will be univerſally acknowledged—when civil and eccleſiaſtical tyranny ſhall be baniſhed from the face of the earth, and when it will not be found practicable to procure any licentious mobs, to ſupport the cauſe of an ignorant and intereſted intolerance.

We again expreſs our deep concern at the iniquitous riots which have lately happened at Birmingham, at the acts of violence and injuſtice which have been exerciſed againſt you and your friends; and at the loſs ſcience and literature have ſuſtained in the deſtruction of your books, manuſcripts, and philoſophical apparatus.

We rejoice in the ſecurity of your perſon, notwithſtanding the malevolence of your adverſaries, and at the magnanimity with which you have ſuſtained the injuries that you have received.

Permit us to intreat you to convey our cordial and affectionate condolence to your fellow-ſufferers in the cauſe of freedom and public virtue—As to yourſelf, we deſire to teſtify in the moſt public manner the high ſenſe we entertain of your merit, and we beg leave to ſubſcribe ourſelves, with great reſpect and regard, Reverend Sir,

Your moſt obedient, and moſt humble ſervants, &c.

Declaration of the Volunteers, *and* Inhabitants at large, *of the Town and Neighbourhood of* Belfaſt.

July 14, 1791.

NEITHER on Marble nor on Braſs can the rights and duties of Men be ſo durably regiſtered, as on their memories, and on their hearts. We, therefore, meet this day to commemorate the *French Revolution*, that the remembrance of this great event may ſink deeply into our hearts, warmed not merely with the fellowing-feeling of Townſmen, but with a ſympathy which binds us to the human race, in a brotherhood of Intereſt, of Duty, and of Affection.

A Revolution of ſuch moment to mankind, involving ſo many millions, embracing ſo great a country, and compleated in ſo ſhort a time, is apt to confound and perplex by the magnitude of the object, and the rapidity of its motion. We, there-

therefore, think it beſt to attach our minds upon one ſimple ſublime truth, where our opinions may centre, and our judgments find ſtability. We are men of plain, and we hope, ſound underſtandings—We will diſentangle ourſelves from thoſe bewitching bonds with which an enticing and meretricious eloquence has of late vainly endeavoured to tie down the Freedom and the Strength of Manhood; and neither ſophiſticated by genius, nor rendered miſerable by refinement and myſtery, we will think and declare our thoughts, not as Politicians, but as *Men*, as *Citizens*, and as *Volunteers!*

As MEN, therefore, we think, that Government is a truſt for the uſe of the People—the PEOPLE, in the largeſt ſenſe of that miſapprehended word. We think that the Public Weal is the end of Government, and the forms of Government are merely the mutable means for obtaining this end; means that may be modelled or changed by the real will of the Public; a will ſupreme;—paramount to all other authority.

As CITIZENS, we think, that no people can promiſe unconditional obedience; and that obedience itſelf ceaſes to be a duty, when the will of the people ceaſes to be the law of the land.

As VOLUNTEERS, we think, that the Force of the People ſhould form the guarantee of Freedom; and that their freedom is the only ſure guarantee of Public Happineſs.

Here, then, we take our ſtand,—and, if we be aſked, what is the French Revolution to us? we anſwer—MUCH.

Firſt, Much as MEN. It is good for human nature that the graſs grows where the Baſtille ſtood. We do rejoice at an event which ſeemed the breaking of a charm that held *univerſal* France in a Baſtille of civil and religious bondage. When we behold this enormous and miſshapen Pile of Abuſes, cemented merely by cuſtom, and raiſed upon the ignorance of a proſtrate People, tottering to its baſe—to the very level of equal liberty and common weal, we do really rejoice at this Reſurrection of Human Nature; and we congratulate our Brother MAN, coming forth from the Vaults of ingenious Torture, and from the Cave of Death. We do congratulate the Chriſtian World that there is in it one great Nation, that has renounced all ideas of conqueſt, and has publiſhed the firſt glorious Manifeſto of Humanity, of Union, and of Peace. In return, we pray to God that Peace may reſt in their Land; and that it may never be in the power of Royalty, Nobility, or a *Prieſthood*, to diſturb the harmony of a people, conſulting about thoſe Laws which muſt enſure their own Happineſs, and

that

that of unborn Millions. The French Revolution is therefore much to us as MEN, and much to us,

Secondly, as IRISHMEN. We too have a Country, and we hold it very dear—ſo dear to us its *Intereſt*, that we wiſh all *civil and religious intolerance* annihilated in this land—ſo dear to us its *Honour*, that we wiſh an eternal ſtop to the Traffic of Public Liberty which is bought by one and ſold to another—ſo dear to us its *Freedom*, that we wiſh for nothing ſo much as *a real repreſentative of the national will*, the ſureſt guide and guardian of national happineſs.

Go on then—Great and Gallant People!—to practice the ſublime philoſophy of your legiſlation; to force applauſe from nations leaſt diſpoſed to do you juſtice; and not by conqueſt, but by the omnipotence of reaſon, to convert and liberate the *world*—a World whoſe eyes are fixed on you; whoſe heart is with you; who talks of you with all her tongues. You are, in very truth, the Hope of this World; of all except a few men in a few Cabinets, who thought the human race belonged to them, not they to the human race; but now are taught by awful example, and tremble; and dare not confide in armies arrayed againſt you and your cauſe.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That a Copy of this Declaration be forthwith tranſmitted, in our Name, by our Preſident, to the National Aſſembly of France.

WILLIAM SHARMAN, PRESIDENT.

At a ſelect Meeting of the Friends of Univerſal Peace and Liberty, held at the Thatched-houſe Tavern, London,

Auguſt 20, 1791,

The following Addreſs and Declaration to our Fellow Citizens was agreed on, and ordered to be publiſhed.

Friends and Fellow Citizens,

AT a moment like the preſent, when wilful miſrepreſentations are induſtriouſly ſpread by the Partizans of Arbitrary Power, and the Advocates of Paſſive Obedience and Court Government, we think it incumbent on us to declare to the world our Principles, and the Motives of our Conduct.

We rejoice at the glorious event of the *French Revolution*.

If it be aſked—What is the French Revolution to us?

We anſwer (as has already been anſwered in another place) *It is much*—much to us as Men—much to us as Engliſhmen.

As Men, we rejoice in the Freedom of Twenty-five Millions of our Fellow-men. We rejoice in the proſpect which ſuch a magnificent example opens to the world. We congratulate the French Nation for having laid the axe to the root of Tyranny, and for erecting Government on the *Sacred Hereditary Rights of Man*—Rights which appertain to ALL, and not to *any* ONE more than to another. We know of no human authority ſuperior to that of a whole Nation; and we profeſs and proclaim it as our principle, that every Nation has, at all times, an inherent indefeaſible right to conſtitute and eſtabliſh ſuch Government for itſelf as beſt accords with its diſpoſition, intereſt, and happineſs.

As Engliſhmen, we alſo rejoice, becauſe we are *immediately* intereſted in the French Revolution.

Without enquiring into the juſtice on either ſide, of the reproachful charges of intrigue and ambition, which the Engliſh and French Courts have conſtantly made on each other!—We confine ourſelves to this obſervation:

That if the Court of France *only* was in fault, and the numerous Wars which have diſtreſſed both countries, are chargeable on her *alone*, that Court now exiſts no longer; and the cauſe and the conſequence muſt ceaſe together. The French, therefore, by the Revolution they have made, have conquered for US, as well as for themſelves; if it be true, that *their* Court only was in fault, and ours never.—On this ſtate of the caſe the French Revolution concerns us *immediately*.

We are oppreſſed with a heavy national debt, a burthen of taxes, and an expenſive Adminiſtration of Government, beyond thoſe of any people in the world.

We have alſo a very numerous Poor; and we hold that the moral obligation of providing for Old Age, helpleſs Infancy, and Poverty, is far ſuperior to that of ſupplying the invented wants of Courtly Extravagance, Ambition, and Intrigue.

We believe there is no inſtance to be produced, but in England, of *Seven* Millions of Inhabitants, which make but little more than *One* Million of Families, paying yearly *Seventeen* Millions of Taxes.

As it has always been held out by all Adminiſtrations, that the reſtleſs ambition of the Court of France, rendered this expence neceſſary to us for our own defence, we conſequently rejoice as Men deeply intereſted in the French Revolution (for that Court, as we have already ſaid, exiſts no longer) and conſequently the ſame enormous expences need not continue to us.

Thus

Thus rejoicing, as we ſincerely do, both as Men, and Engliſhmen, as Lovers of univerſal Peace and Freedom, and as Friends to our own national proſperity, and a reduction of our public expences:—We cannot but expreſs our aſtoniſhment, that any part or any Members of our own Government, ſhould reprobate the extinction of that very Power in France, or wiſh to ſee it reſtored, to whoſe influence they formerly attributed (whilſt they appeared to lament) the enormous increaſe of our own burthens and taxes.

What then, Are they ſorry that the pretence for new oppreſſive taxes, and the occaſion for continuing many old taxes will be at an end!—If ſo, and if it is the policy of Courts and Court-government to prefer enemies to friends, and a ſyſtem of war to that of peace, as affording more pretences for Places, Offices, Penſions, Revenue, and Taxation, it is high time for the people of every nation to look with circumſpection to their own intereſts.

Thoſe who *pay* the expence, and *not* thoſe who *participate* in the emoluments ariſing from it, are the perſons immediately intereſted in enquires of this kind. We are a part of that national body, on whom this annual expence of ſeventeen Millions falls; and we conſider the preſent opportunity of the French Revolution, as a moſt happy one for leſſening the enormous load under which this nation groans. If this be not done, we ſhall then have reaſon to conclude, that the cry of intrigue and ambition againſt *other* Courts, is no more than the common Cant of *all* Courts.

We think it alſo neceſſary to expreſs our aſtoniſhment that a government deſirous of being *called* FREE, ſhould *prefer* connexions with the moſt deſpotic and arbitrary powers in Europe. We know of none more deſerving this deſcription than thoſe of Turkey and Pruſſia, and the whole combination of German deſpots. Separated as we happily are by nature from the tumults of the Continent, we reprobate all ſyſtems and intrigues which ſacrifice (and that too at a great expence) the bleſſings of our natural ſituation—Such ſyſtems cannot have a national origin.

If we are aſked, what Government is? We hold it to be nothing more than a NATIONAL ASSOCIATION; and we hold that to be the beſt, which ſecures to every man his rights, and promotes the greateſt quantity of happineſs with the *leaſt expence*. We live to improve, or we live in vain; and therefore we admit of no maxims of government or policy, on the mere

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Wants appendix

ſcore of antiquity or other men's authority, the *old* whigs or the *new*. We will exerciſe the reaſon with which we are endued, or we poſſeſs it unworthily. As reaſon is given at all times, it is for the purpoſe of being uſed at all times.

Among the bleſſings which the French Revolution has produced to that nation, we enumerate the abolition of the Feudal ſyſtem of injuſtice and tyranny, on the 4th of Auguſt, 1789.

Beneath the Feudal ſyſtem all Europe has long groaned; and from it England is not yet free. Game-laws, Borough Tenures, and tyrannical monopolies of numerous kinds ſtill remain amongſt us. But rejoicing, as we ſincerely do, in the freedom of others, till we ſhall happily accompliſh our own, we intended to commemorate this prelude to the univerſal extirpation of the Feudal ſyſtem, by meeting on the anniverſary of that day (the 4th of Auguſt) at the Crown and Anchor. From this meeting we were prevented by the interference of certain *unnamed* and *ſkulking* perſons with the maſter of the tavern, who informed us, that on *their* repreſentations he could not receive us.——Let thoſe who live by, or countenance Feudal oppreſſions, take the reproach of this ineffectual meanneſs and cowardice to themſelves. They cannot ſtifle the public declaration of our honeſt, open, and avowed opinions.

Theſe are our principles, and theſe our ſentiments.

They embrace the intereſt and happineſs of the great body of the nation, of which we are a part. As to Riots and Tumults, let thoſe anſwer for them who by wilful miſrepreſentations, endeavour to excite and promote them; or, who ſeek to *ſtun* the ſenſe of the nation, and loſe the great cauſe of public good, in the outrages of a miſinformed mob. We take our ground on principles that require no ſuch riotous aid. We have nothing to apprehend from the poor; for we are pleading their cauſe. And we fear not proud oppreſſion, for we have Truth on our ſide. We ſay, and we repeat it, that the French Revolution opens to the world an opportunity in which all good citizens muſt rejoice, that of promoting the general happineſs of Man. And that it, moreover, offers to this Country in particular, an opportunity of reducing our enormous Taxes.

Theſe are our objects, and we will purſue them.

J. HORNE TOOKE, CHAIRMAN.

FINIS.